



## **For Reference**

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**1999**

Prepared by  
Bradley E. Weidenhamer

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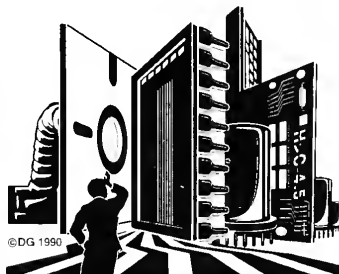
The Brethren

# vangelist

A newsletter for Brethren people

January 1999

## Y2K: ARE YOU READY?



mid-1999. Now the computer will read the date as (00) and interpret it as 1900. So on January 1st our friend born in 1940 will be *minus* 40 years old, or, in the computer's terms, non-existent! Not so fine.

The coming date change will affect every aspect of electronic operations and commerce . . . from computers, security systems, voter registration and financial transactions to operation of production machinery, satellites, televisions and automobiles. Power stations could shut down, automatic product "use-by" date systems could reject products, loans could default and credit cards expire.

Some people believe an electronic "Armageddon" will occur when critical systems shut down. They forecast the collapse of banking, stock market, telecommunications, energy and national defense systems. These experts believe we could face a global recession in the year 2000—lasting for at least 12 months—resulting in a significant drop in the U.S. Gross National Product.

### WHERE IS YOUR TRUST?

We do not want to admit how much we rely on computers to run

our businesses, our governments and our lives. Our level of panic over an event such as this is a direct reflection of the amount of trust we put in "the system." Have we gone too far in placing our faith in our technological accomplishments, believing they will save us?

If you are not sure what the future will bring, consider this:

### LONG AFTER THE YEAR 2000 . . .

#### • God will still exist.

*In the beginning you [God] laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end. (Psalm 102:25-27)*

#### • God will continue to operate.

*The plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations. (Ps. 33:11)*

#### • God will always be in control.

*The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. (Ps. 146:10)*

(continued on next page)

Itly being said and Year 2000 computer referred to as the Y2K imply Y2K. As a result, becoming alarmed an panicking. article provides some ritual perspective on comfort *our hearts*. e used as an evan- each non-Christians about Y2K. ten from a tract pub- ican Tract Society. t can be purchased others. The article is on of the American (1-98). For free sam- all 1-800-54-TRACT net/atn). he subject of Y2K, nd 5.

### 2000 computer

*the most serious finance, commerce operations in mod- not solved in time, nks, major corpora- "Military could all be s running out. What "Wring?*

### IS Y2K?

"Wness started over 30 a computer compa- write the year's date ast two digits. Com- "Bed 1970 as "70," the "Tetstood by the system. ne age of someone "40, (which a comput- "V40") the computer e current date (70) and determine the 30. Fine. comes when we reach

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# The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 121, No. 1

A newsletter for Brethren people

January 1999

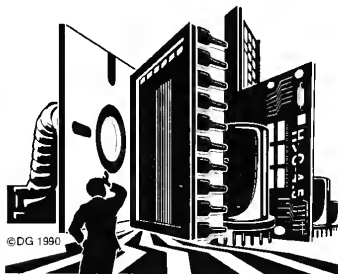
## Y2K: ARE YOU READY?

Much is currently being said and written about the Year 2000 computer problem, often referred to as the Y2K problem or as simply Y2K. As a result, many people are becoming alarmed and some are even panicking.

The following article provides some much-needed spiritual perspective on this problem. It can comfort our hearts. And it can also be used as an evangelistic tool to reach non-Christians who are alarmed about Y2K.

The article is taken from a tract published by the American Tract Society. Copies of the tract can be purchased for distribution to others. The article is used by permission of the American Tract Society (11-11-98). For free samples or a catalog, call 1-800-54-TRACT ([www.gospelcom.net/ats](http://www.gospelcom.net/ats)).

For more on the subject of Y2K, see pages 2, 4, and 5.



mid-1999. Now the computer will read the date as (00) and interpret it as 1900. So on January 1st our friend born in 1940 will be *minus* 40 years old, or, in the computer's terms, non-existent! Not so fine.

The coming date change will affect every aspect of electronic operations and commerce . . . from computers, security systems, voter registration and financial transactions to operation of production machinery, satellites, televisions and automobiles. Power stations could shut down, automatic product "use-by" date systems could reject products, loans could default and credit cards expire.

Some people believe an electronic "Armageddon" will occur when critical systems shut down. They forecast the collapse of banking, stock market, telecommunications, energy and national defense systems. These experts believe we could face a global recession in the year 2000—lasting for at least 12 months—resulting in a significant drop in the U.S. Gross National Product.

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our businesses, our governments and our lives. Our level of panic over an event such as this is a direct reflection of the amount of trust we put in "the system." Have we gone too far in placing our faith in our technological accomplishments, believing they will save us?

If you are not sure what the future will bring, consider this:

### LONG AFTER THE YEAR 2000 . . .

#### • God will still exist.

*In the beginning you [God] laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.* (Psalm 102:25-27)

#### • God will continue to operate.

*The plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.* (Ps. 33:11)

#### • God will always be in control.

*The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.* (Ps. 146:10)

(continued on next page)

**THE YEAR 2000 computer problem** is the most serious global threat to finance, commerce and government operations in modern history. If not solved in time, governments, banks, major corporations and the military could all be crippled. Time is running out. What will the future bring?

### WHAT IS Y2K?

The current mess started over 30 years ago when computer companies decided to write the year's date using only the last two digits. Computers recognized 1970 as "70," the 19 being understood by the system. To calculate the age of someone born in, say, 1940, (which a computer reads as "40") the computer would take the current date (70) subtract (40) and determine the person's age as 30. Fine.

The problem comes when we reach

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter  
is in the center of this issue

• **God's power will never diminish.**

*Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. (Isaiah 40:28)*

• **God's security system will always function.**

*The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you. (Deuteronomy 33:27)*

• **God will still listen to you.**

*The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. (Ps. 145:18-19)*

• **God will continue to defend you.**

*You will not have to fight this battle. . . . Stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you . . . . Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face [your enemies] tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you. (2 Chronicles 20:17)*

• **God will never reject you.**

*Come near to God and he will come near to you. For the LORD will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance. (James 4:8; Ps. 94:14)*

• **God will still value you immensely.**

*Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31)*

• **God's gifts to you will never default.**

*If you, then, though you are evil,*

*know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! (Matt. 7:11)*

• **Neither God's promises to you nor His love for you will ever expire.**

*The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made. (Ps. 145:13) Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever. (Ps. 136:1)*

*Would you like to "reprogram" your heart to run on God's computer? Here's how:*

**1) Recognize the Problem:**

No one is born "eternity compliant," and without massive reprogramming, we will remain out-of-sync with God, forever. We cannot solve this problem ourselves, it's too immense.

*There is no one righteous, not even one. . . . For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:10, 23)*

**2) Understand the Solution:**

## Don't Panic

The beginning of the previous article is a little more pessimistic than I would prefer it to be. While some "experts" are predicting dire circumstances as a result of the Y2K problem, other "experts" are expecting only minor glitches.

I do not want to be an alarmist. Like the Apostle Paul, I would ask you "not to become easily unsettled or alarmed" by some article from us (cf. 2 Thess. 2:2).

On the other hand, I don't want you to be uninformed. As editor of a Christian publication, I would not be acting responsibly if I did not call

The only way to repair our problem is through God's Son, Jesus Christ.

*Righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. (Romans 3:22)*

**3) Accept His Salvation:**

Trust in Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection to provide all the "modification" your spiritual system will ever need.

*Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. (1 Peter 3:18)*

You can pray through your decision like this:

*Dear God,*

*I know I fall short of Your perfect will every day. I have tried to do my best, but I realize that is not good enough to repair my problem and get me to heaven. I trust in Jesus' death on the cross to delete the penalty for all my sins. I believe His resurrection gives me eternal life. Thank you for giving me this free and wonderful gift. Amen.* [✠]

to your attention the possibility of problems when Year 2000 begins.

So while I would again say, "Don't panic. Don't get alarmed." I would also say, "Get informed!" And make prudent preparations." (For suggestions on how to do this, see the article on pages 4 & 5.)

But above all, as the above article emphasizes, put your trust in God. He will see you through no matter what happens. In fact, as is often the case with adversity, Y2K may be an open door to even great blessings for you. And it may provide significant opportunities for you and your church to minister to others. [✠]

— Editor Richard Winfield

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## Pontius' Puddle



# The Example of Christ

By Dan Lawson

***To resolve conflict in a marriage, both the husband and the wife need to follow the example of Christ.***

**H**AVE YOU ever had a quarrel with your spouse? Come on now, be honest. Every marriage has times of conflict and disagreement. Let's just accept it as a fact of life that we are going to have arguments. Bill Cosby once said, "I have called my wife some names that I was proud I even thought of, and my wife has run some off on me that I have written down."

It is foolish to think that we are going to be able to live together as husband and wife and never have an argument. The question is, Are we going to let those arguments break us, or make us?

If anyone had a right to be angry at His situation, it was Jesus at the crucifixion. He was innocent of all wrong, yet He was being executed as a common criminal by an angry mob. Jesus had come to show these people the way of salvation. He had come to demonstrate to them God's love. And their response was to nail Him to

**"It is foolish to think that we are going to be able to live together as husband and wife and never have an argument."**

a cross and spit in His face. Why did He take it? Why were five of the seven statements that Jesus made from the cross statements of concern for others?

I submit to you that it was because of His divine love. He accepted the inhumanity of the cross because He loved those who put Him there. This is the example

that we need to follow in all of our relationships, but especially in the relationship of marriage.



Many husbands do not realize that when wives get angry, the best way to respond is to extend a tender touch and a listening ear. Instead, the average husband braces himself and prepares a hostile reply, because his reaction comes out of human arrogance rather than *agape* love.

If, however, we follow the example of Christ on the cross as it applies to marriage, we do not give a harsh word for a harsh word. Instead, we let love take its place. If both husband and wife do this repeatedly, their marriage can only grow stronger.

***When your spouse is hurting, you should focus on your spouse's pain, not your own.***

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her . . .*, the Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 5:25. I believe that Paul is telling husbands to follow the example of Christ on the cross in their marriages. The problem is that wives are often suspicious when their husbands express this kind of love. This is usually due to the fact that this kind of love is not consistent and repeatedly expressed.

It is like the husband who was

overcome with a deep feeling of love for his wife one day while at work. He decided to stop on the way home and buy her a box of candy and a bouquet of flowers to express that love. When he walked through the doorway, his wife took one look at him and burst into tears. He thought it was because she was moved by his spontaneous display of affection—until she spoke.

"That's just great!" she said. "The perfect ending to a rotten day. I wrecked the car; the baby has been screaming all day from cutting teeth; I had a salesman I couldn't get rid of, which made me burn dinner; and now you come home drunk!" It would seem obvious that his displays of affection for her were all too infrequent.

***When your spouse is happy, you should share the joy.***

The flip side of a love that feels another's pain is a love that feels another's joy. Jesus said, *I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be*

**"If we follow the example of Christ on the cross as it applies to marriage, we do not give a harsh word for a harsh word."**

*complete. . . Love each other as I have loved you* (John 15:11, 12). In this command, Jesus clearly links Christ-like love with joy.

Nowhere is this more true than in marriage. When we love our marriage partner so deeply that we think first of the partner's pain rather than our own, our reward is a deep, abiding joy that defies human description. And when both partners reciprocate this kind of Christ-like love, the joy is only compounded. [†]

Next month we will look at "Whose fault is it?"

*Dr. Lawson is senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. This is one of a series of articles in which he applies Bible truths to our personal lives.*

# How to prepare for Y2K

By Richard Winfield, Editor

WHO COULD IMAGINE that such a small thing—using two digits instead of four digits to represent the year in computer software (99 instead of 1999, for example)—could cause such a big problem! (See the article on page 1 if you have not already done so.) One is reminded of the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:27—"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong."

But a big problem *is* what it has become. At best, it is a problem that is costing billions of dollars to fix—more than \$600 billion dollars by some estimates—as computer programmers work their way through millions of lines of programming to make the necessary changes.

At worst, it's a problem that won't be fixed by January 1, 2000. In which case, thousands of computers used by government, industry, communications, banks, and utilities (to mention a few) may malfunction or stop working. And if this happens, it could mean big trouble for all of us.

## A little good news

Thankfully, the outlook is not as bleak as it once appeared. Government and industry are at work on the problem. Recently, for example, President Clinton announced that the Social Security system is 100 percent compliant with standards and safeguards for the year 2000. "The millennium bug will not delay the payment of Social Security checks by a single day," Clinton said.

Nevertheless, some experts warn that all vital systems cannot be fixed by the end of this year. And since computer systems are interconnected, those systems that aren't fixed could spread bad data and recorropt those that have been repaired.

So where do we stand? "The only certainty about the Year 2000 computer problem," says an unnamed writer on the Internet web site

Christian Y2K, "is uncertainty itself. We won't know how severe the Y2K disruptions may be until Jan. 1, 2000. The very nature of the problem is that it is impossible to predict. If anyone says they know for certain what Y2K will bring, they are fooling you. No one knows for sure."

In light of these uncertainties, what should we do? How can we prepare for Y2K?

## Become informed

The first step to take is to become informed. Look into the issue for yourself. You may decide that there is nothing to worry about and that no action is necessary. But before making that decision, study the issue so that it is an informed decision.

A number of sources of information are available—newspaper articles, magazine articles, and books (the problem with books, however, is that they are quickly out of date). But the best source of information is probably the Internet. Even if you don't own a computer, you can probably access the Internet on a computer at your local public library.

The advantage of the Internet is that information can be updated regularly, even daily. The disadvantages of the Internet are the sheer mass of information available and the fact that practically any nitwit can set up a web page and start spouting his or her views.

A good place to begin your search on the Internet is with the Christian Y2K web site (located at [www.christiany2k.com](http://www.christiany2k.com)). I liked this site because of the helpful way it defines the problem and because of the many links it provides to other web sites, both Christian and general. I would also recommend *Christian Computing* magazine's coverage of Y2K (at [www.gospelcom.net/ccmag/y2k/](http://www.gospelcom.net/ccmag/y2k/)), which takes a moderate view of the problem. See also [www.y2ktoday.com](http://www.y2ktoday.com), which presents up-to-date articles from national and international

news. It is managed by a former head of the UPI Newswire service. And you might want to look at the Joseph Project 2000 web site ([www.josephproject2000.org](http://www.josephproject2000.org)) and the Red Cross web site ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)). From these you can find links to many other web sites and articles.

A few guidelines should be followed as you look at information about Y2K. These apply whether you find your information in newspapers or magazines or on the Internet.

(1) Don't look at just one source. Try to gain a balance. One source may scare you to death. Another may help to calm your fears.

(2) Beware of information from sources that are trying to sell you something. If someone is trying to sell you freeze-dried food, for example, that person wants you to believe that you are going to need it.

(3) Look for up-to-date information. Steve Hewitt of *Christian Computing* magazine notes that "Y2K is a technical problem and technology has always been a fast moving subject." Current articles and news releases are going to be more relevant than those written a year or more ago (which is why books are not the best source).

(4) Take note of the bias of the source. For example, web sites that present selections of new articles on Y2K may only select articles that buttress a certain position. Look for sites that present articles representing a variety of positions.

(5) And finally, beware of those with psychological problems. This ranges from those who insist they are right despite all evidence to the contrary to those with all kinds of bizarre ideas.

## Taking action

If you conclude from your reading that something may go wrong come January 1, 2000, the next step is to decide what you are going to do about it. This is a big step. Computer expert Ed Yourdon, who has written extensively about Y2K, refers to this step as a psychological "jumping-off point"—the point at which one's concern about the risks outweighs one's concern that other people may look at you funny and consider you a fanatic.

What steps you take depend on



how bad you think it will be? Hearings conducted by the U.S. Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem have focused on eight potential problem areas.

- Utilities and the national power grid
- International banking and finance
- Health care
- Transportation
- Telecommunications
- Pension and mutual funds
- Emergency planning
- General business

What this means in practical terms is that electrical power may be unavailable in some areas for a time. Manufacturing and production industries may be disrupted. Roads could be closed or gridlocked if traffic signals are disrupted. Electronic credit card transactions may not be processed. Telephone systems may not work. Pension checks may not arrive on time.

### Some easy steps

The Red Cross has developed some easy steps we can take to prepare for possible disruptions. They include (for a complete list see [www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/y2k.html](http://www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/y2k.html)):

1. Stocking a supply of water and non-perishable foods to last several days to a week and an ample supply of medications. *The Red Cross does not recommend hoarding supplies.*
2. Having some extra cash on hand. Withdraw money in small amounts well in advance of the end of the year and keep it in a safe place.
3. Filling your automobile gas tank before 12/31/99.
4. Having extra blankets, coats, hats, and gloves to keep you warm, and plenty of flashlights and extra batteries. If you purchase an alternative heating device, make sure it is approved for use indoors.
5. Checking with emergency service providers in your community to see how your community is preparing for any potential problems.
6. Being prepared to relocate to a shelter for warmth and protection during a prolonged power outage.

The Red Cross notes that these recommendations make good sense regardless of the potential problem. In fairness, it should also be noted that some people recommend going far beyond these "easy steps."

### Thoughts for the New Year:

## How would you change the world?

*The following brief article appeared in the newsletter of the Garber Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio. It was written by Pastor Jim Rowsey. It was printed in the July 1998 newsletter, but it seems appropriate for the New Year, as many of us take a fresh look at life. It is reprinted here with Rev. Rowsey's permission.*

**S**UPPOSE YOU DECIDED to set out to change the world. Everyone agrees that the world needs changed! If you really took this world mess seriously and determined to do something about it, where would you begin?

Would you start with the United Nations? Would you be allowed a hearing, and if you were, what changes would you really suggest? A new system—a new federation of nations—a new world government? You know instinctively that this is not the answer.

Perhaps you would begin with Washington! Sometimes we think that a change there would wipe out the whole world mess in a brief time. But when we really think about it, we know that isn't true. Besides, what change would you really make? You could fire

some people, but would it really make a basic change? Washington is smaller than the UN, but it is still a complicated situation.

Maybe you would begin with your own town or city. Get next to the mayor, the council. Suppose you could. What would you say? What changes—really fundamental changes—would you make?

Well, how about your neighbors? Try to make them what they ought to be! Pretty presumptuous. You might create more problems than you'd eliminate. When you think it through, you realize that the basic problem is not in systems or governments. The fundamental need is the human heart—greed, selfishness, pride.

And where do you begin to change that? Ultimately with yourself, of course. That's the place where any important change must begin. Become yourself what you ought to be, what others ought to be if they were like you. And the only way to have that change is to let Jesus Christ have control. Turn the controls over to Him and let Him love and forgive and care through you. Then you will begin to change—and the world will too! [✠]

Larry Burkett of Christian Financial Concepts recommends the following preparations with regards to financial and personal records.

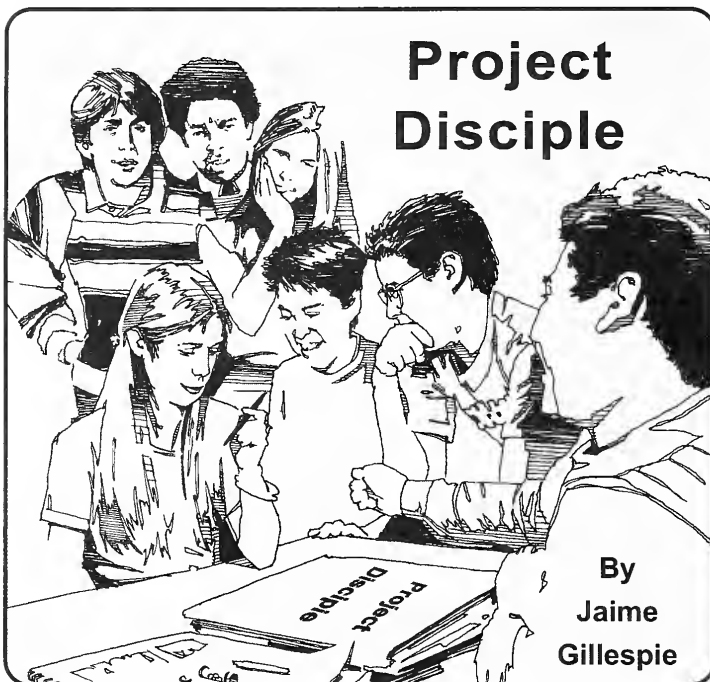
1. Keep printed copies of all financial transactions: bank, insurance, money market funds, mutual funds, stocks, taxes, and the like. You may need these copies to verify financial claims if computer-based information becomes corrupted.
2. Get a copy of your Earnings and Benefits Statement from Social Security.
3. Develop of list of other important records that could be lost during a computer failure—birth certificate, school transcripts, medical history, immunization records—and get printed copies now.

Please note that these suggestions are being offered at the start of 1999.

We still have nearly a year to go. As the year progresses, it may become obvious that the Y2K "bugs" have been eradicated and that emergency measures are not necessary. Or it may become apparent that major problems can be expected and that we should prepare for the worst. *It is important, therefore, that we stay informed in the months ahead.*

Finally, I would repeat the appeal I made on page 2: Don't panic. Begin making some modest preparations now (you can always use the extra food if you don't need it next January). Strengthen your ties to other Christian brothers and sisters, who must also go through this uncertain time. And above all, remember that your Heavenly Father will be with you no matter what happens. [✠]

*Next month, the church's role in Y2K.*



# Project Disciple

By  
Jaime  
Gillespie

**H**AVE YOU ever wanted to go on a missions trip but didn't feel as though you were ready? Or have you ever considered serving as a summer intern, but the thought of all that responsibility made you want to hide under the bed covers?

If either of these situations describes you, don't feel bad. All of us at some point in our lives feel unprepared to do God's work! All of us worry about having enough wisdom to serve God, and we all fret about being able to share our faith without making fools of ourselves.

But we're not alone! In fact, we are in great company. Even the Apostle Paul said, "When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God" (I Cor. 2:1, *NIV*). Jesus called fishermen to lay down their nets and follow Him, just as He calls us to lay down all the cares of our world and take up His cross.

I'm sure James and John felt as unprepared to give up fishing and become disciples of the Greatest Teacher who ever lived as some of us are to serve as an associate pas-

tor or to minister in Jamaica! But when God calls and we answer in faith, He gives us all the knowledge we could ever need to do His work!

The Brethren Church needs committed people to accept God's call to serve as interns, national crusaders, short-term mission team members, and district crusaders. Many of you have felt a call to ministry, but you aren't sure where you are to go or what you are being called to do. These denominational service programs are perfect to help you discern what God is calling you to do.

## A new dimension

This year The Brethren Church will add a new dimension to the Summer Ministries program. It will be called *Project Disciple*. The purpose of *Project Disciple* will be to help prepare participants to serve God, so that they no longer have to worry about what they are to do and how they are to do it.

*Project Disciple* will consist of a one-week training period for anyone serving in the Summer Ministries program. This includes those interested in the national crusading pro-

gram as well as those who want to serve as interns or as members of short-term missions teams. District crusaders are also welcome!

The week will consist of three components: spiritual foundation, leadership preparation, and ministry identification. During the spiritual foundation portion of the training, you will be taught the biblical base of discipleship as well as some practical ideas to improve your personal relationship with the Lord. You will learn the importance of basing every decision and action of your life on prayer. You will also learn how to practice other spiritual disciplines.

Next you will be taught leadership in the style of the Greatest Leader who ever walked the earth—Jesus Christ! This component will emphasize the impact you can have as a servant leader. It will also teach you to use the gifts God has given you in your ministry.

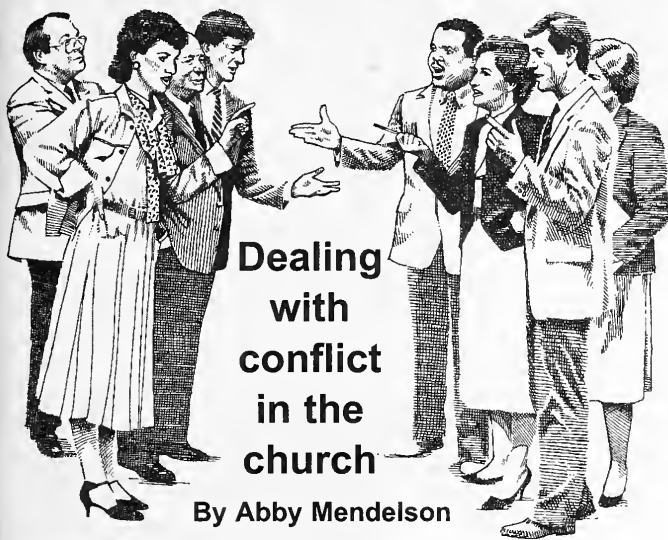
The ministry identification portion of the week will help you look at the particular ministry in which you will be participating. It will then provide you training for the specific tasks and responsibilities you will face as you carry out that ministry.

Our long-range goal is to train young people to be disciples of Jesus Christ and to empower them to go and spread the word of the Lord throughout our communities and schools. Their summer of service will be only the beginning of a life-long discipleship process.

*Project Disciple* will be held in Ashland, Ohio, and is tentatively scheduled for May 23–28 and June 13–18, 1999. Housing, meals, and materials will be provided. All you need to do is get here!

Plans for 1999 Brethren Church Summer Ministries are now being finalized, and promotional materials will be mailed soon. If you are interested in any aspect of the Summer Ministries program or have any questions regarding Summer Ministries, please contact Rev. David West or Jaime Gillespie at the Brethren Church National Office, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805 (phone, 419-289-1708). [✕]

*Ms. Gillespie has been assisting with youth programming at The Brethren Church National Office.*



## Dealing with conflict in the church

By Abby Mendelson

**Y**OUR CHURCH is a lot like your family. Just as intergenerational conflicts arise when your family gathers around the dinner table, so it is when your congregation comes together for business meetings. Age and youth, long-standing members and newcomers—all have different ideas about worship style, how funds should be used, and what programs should be given priority.

How do you resolve these conflicts without tearing your congregation apart? How do you use intergenerational conflicts to make your congregation stronger? Here are ten suggestions.

**1. Admit that you need each other.** Far too many congregations splinter, with older members (or younger ones) saying it's our way—or the highway. For congregations to grow, age needs the energy and vision for the future of youth; and youth needs the wisdom and stability of age.

**2. Identify the areas of conflict.** Congregations often ignore conflicts, or assume that they'll disappear. They don't! It takes work to resolve conflicts. The needs and preferences of others have validity and must be taken into consideration—even though these "other

people" may be of a different age or new to the congregation.

**3. Listen.** Listen to what is being said. Try to understand it as something you might say if you were that person's age or had that person's needs. In other words, put yourself in that person's position. Just because the nursery worked for your children 20 (or 50) years ago, for example, doesn't mean it doesn't need a thorough upgrade now.

**4. Remember what group you are addressing.** Congregations develop a group identity, but newer members often have a consumer identity. They frequently are thinking, "How will this benefit me?" If consumers don't find what they want, they leave. Do you want the future walking out the door?

**5. Recognize impact.** Consider how change will affect your congregation before you embark on a new course. If, for example, you want to bring in young people, consider what changes they might demand—before their presence splits your congregation.

**6. Be aware when you are emotionally involved.** Someone has said, "When people say, 'It's only the principle of the thing,' generally it's their ego at stake." If you

discover yourself saying this, it's time to back off and reflect. If you are leading the meeting, delegate your position to someone who isn't emotionally involved.

**7. Separate the issues.** When people are troubled about one thing, they often confuse it with something else. For example: Are you upset about the new youth leader because the building needs some cleaning after the youth group meets, or because there are a lot of new young faces in the congregation?

**8. Empower all parties in the conflict.** People need to be part of the decision-making process. While you may find it difficult to share power with the younger or older or newer or longer-term members of the congregation, it must be done in order to resolve conflict.

**9. Search for common ground.** Getting angry and arguing will not make the other person's point of view go away. At worst, your attitude could rend the congregation asunder. Seek out those areas on which you agree, and work from there on those things about which you don't agree.

**10. Don't be afraid of mediation—or of seeking outside counsel.** Sometimes the only way out of an impasse is to bring in a neutral party to mediate. But mediation only works when both sides are willing to accept the process—and the agreement worked out by the mediator.

Think about your congregation and the times when conflicts occurred. How many of these ten techniques were used? If they had been used, would they have helped?

As congregations grow and as younger members become active in the church, change is inevitable. It is not possible for a congregation to grow and, at the same time, for one group to maintain control. Growth always involves giving up control. So be prepared: when growth occurs and new people and a new generation come into your church, it will require changes in the way things are done! [✠]

*This article was provided by Conflict Resolution Center International, 204 37th St., Pittsburgh, PA 15201 (www.igc.apc.org/lercii).*

# Ashland Theological Seminary

## A spiritual community for equipping servant leaders

### MISSION

Ashland Theological Seminary exists to equip men and women for ministry as *servant leaders* in the body of Christ and in the world at large. Ashland Theological Seminary carries out this equipping ministry by being a community that is committed to Scripture, academic excellence, spiritual formation, and practical training.

Each year the faculty and administration of the seminary take a fresh look at opportunities for ministry within the framework of our Mission Statement. We desire to be true to core values that set us apart as an evangelical school anchored firmly to the Word of God.

Forming a spiritual community in which persons can grow and mature in both their personal and their corporate lives is an integral part of our educational process. Seminary education involves not only the challenge of the mind, but also the challenges of the heart and soul.

### MINISTRY

Accepting students into the academic program of the seminary is a complicated process. Not everyone who applies to the seminary is prepared for the rigors of academic training or spiritual development that are part of the life of a student.

The seminary tries to carefully evaluate the readiness of each candidate. Two important parts of this process are a self-evaluation by the student and a recommendation from a pastor who knows the student personally. The pastor's recommendation is also supported by other letters of reference.

The seminary has a lasting commitment to serve The Brethren Church in the prepara-

tion of its leaders. In partnership with The Brethren Church, the seminary has established a scholarship endowment fund — to which many churches and individuals have contributed — that provides full-tuition scholarships to Brethren students who commit themselves to full-time pastoral ministry. Substantial scholarships are also provided for Brethren students who will serve the church in other kinds of ministry.

### OUTREACH

Another distinguishing characteristic of Ashland Theological Seminary is the way it reaches out to welcome students from other denominations. Each year students from across our nation and around the world choose to come to Ashland Seminary because of its firm commitment to the authenticity of Scripture.

This year students from more than 70 denominations and para-church organizations (such as Campus Cru-



*Dr. Frederick J. Finks, President, Ashland Theological Seminary*

sade, Inter-Varsity, Navigators, and Youth for Christ) chose to come to Ashland. Here they find an atmosphere of acceptance and a community of faith in which they can grow and develop as Christian leaders.

At the same time, students from The Brethren Church find an atmosphere at the seminary in which they can explore what it means to be distinctively Brethren. Special courses in Brethren history, doctrine, and polity help Brethren students understand where we have come from as a church and how to chart a course for the future. In addition, special gatherings and spiritual formation groups designed solely for Brethren students help them explore the nature of the church and the essence of ministry among Brethren.

With the Brethren National Office only a few blocks away, students have open access to denominational leaders. Cooperation between the National Office and the seminary has brought about the development of key programs that will strengthen local church ministries.



*Brethren ATS faculty member Dr. Judy Allison chats with Brethren student (and former Brethren missionary) Tim Solomon.*



Dr. Richard Parrott (l.) and Dr. Terry Wardle will head the new Leadership Center at Ashland Theological Seminary.

## CHURCH PLANTING

Ashland Theological Seminary is committed to equipping men and women for effective church-planting ministries. With the recent addition of Dr. Terry Wardle to the ATS faculty, the seminary now stands ready to launch a broad-based church development program that will assist individual churches with tools and training to increase the effectiveness of their ministries.

The seminary's first Church Planting Assessment Program will be held January 18-23, 1999, on the ATS campus. The purpose of this assessment program is to serve as a resource of encouragement for candidates desiring to serve in church-planting ministries.

The core of this assessment program is the establishment of a spiritual formation base from which candidates can draw on the strength of Christ throughout a lifetime of ministry. The program will include extensive use of assessment tools that will provide each candidate insight and information relevant to his or her potential for church-planting ministries. The week-long seminar will also present the 15 principles of church planting developed by Dr. Wardle.

## CHURCH RENEWAL

Ashland Seminary has developed a new ministry for renewal within the church based on a "strategy for change."

Throughout America countless numbers of churches seek faithfully to minister the Good News of Jesus Christ. Whether small or large, independent or denominational, these congregations are made up of committed people and led by pastors who genuinely want to impact their communities for Christ. But many of these churches are struggling to grow and to experience spiritual health. They find themselves in

difficult situations that are, at times, very discouraging.

In response to this growing crisis, ATS has established a program in Church Renewal and Redevelopment called ***Renewing Pastor and People***. Designed as a ministry of growth and development for the local church, this new and exciting program will offer five modules over a 15-month period. The program will involve the pastor, the pastor's spouse, and up to five key lay people in a journey of self-discovery to help their churches grow as effective Christian congregations.

### The five modules are:

- ♦ *Developing as an Effective Pastoral Leader*
- ♦ *The Spiritual Dimension of Ministry*
- ♦ *Developing a Vibrant Philosophy of Ministry*
- ♦ *Team Ministry*
- ♦ *Evangelism that Touches Lives*

The total cost for this program of renewal, including pastoral assessment and materials for up to five lay persons, is \$2,295.00. For Brethren churches the cost is reduced to \$1,795. The first module is set for May 20-22, 1999, and will be limited to 30 churches. Ten spaces have been reserved for Brethren churches on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Ashland Theological Seminary

Committed to:

- ♦ Scripture
- ♦ Academic Excellence
- ♦ Spiritual Formation
- ♦ Practical Training

## BRETHREN SUPPORT

Ashland Theological Seminary is supported heavily by tuition. This means that students share the main burden of being trained for Christian ministry. Even though many students receive support from their local churches or denominational agencies, others are faced with debts and loans.

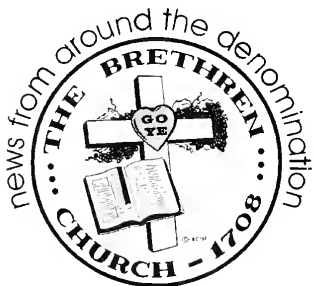
Brethren students find solid financial support through endowed scholarships funded by churches and caring individuals. The seminary has made providing scholarship support as one of its main objectives as we approach the twenty-first century.

Crucial to the program of the seminary is the Fair Share support of every Brethren church. Annually, Brethren support the work and ministry of the seminary through the General Conference approved Fair Share plan. Churches that cannot budget such funds often take up a special offering in January.

We at the seminary wish to express our deepest appreciation to everyone who supports our ministry. This includes alumni, parents, churches, and individuals.

For more information on how you can become a vital part of the life of ATS, call or write:

Dr. Leroy Solomon, Dean of Institutional Development, Ashland Theological Seminary, 910 Center Street, Ashland, OH 44805; phone 419-289-5906. [†]



### In Memory

**Rev. Robert L. Stafford**, 47, of Walkerton, Ind., died December 13, 1998, following an extended bout with cancer. Rev. Stafford served as a Brethren pastor from 1987 until 1993, when cancer forced him to retire. He continued to minister by e-mail and



over the Internet, becoming "Cyber Pastor" to people around the world.

Born May 20, 1951, in Kalamazoo, Mich., he attended St. Paul (Minn.) Bible College. He served as pastor of the Maplewood Christian and Missionary Alliance congregation in St. Paul, Minn., from 1979 to 1983 and was ordained by the Christian and Missionary Alliance in 1981. He then served the Neighborhood Church in Plymouth, Ind., from 1983 to 1985 and the Teegarden First Brethren Church near Lapaz, Ind., from 1987 to 1993. His ordination was recognized in The Brethren Church in 1989.

In 1971 he married Sherry Visscher of Fremont, Mich., who survives him. Also surviving are their two children, Amanda and Thomas, both of Teegarden.

Services were held December 16 at the County Line Brethren Church, Lakeville, Ind., with Brethren Elder Steve Barber assisting.

An article by Rev. Stafford appeared posthumously in the December EVANGELIST. Brother Stafford passed away after that issue of the newsletter went to press. [†]

## Levittown Brethren demonstrate God's love by providing free gift-wrapping at local mall

**Levittown, Pa.** — Members of the Fairless Hills-Levittown Brethren Church demonstrated God's love to their community on Sunday, December 6, by wrapping Christmas gifts for free at a local mall.

Many people were surprised to see the sign that read "Free Gift Wrapping." In fact, some found it hard to believe that it was really free. But the Levittown Brethren soon had them convinced. Not only did they

wrap gifts, but they also gave away copies of children's Bible story books. More than 200 books were given out, each containing a card giving the name, address, and phone number of the church.

A number of people from the church helped with the gift-wrapping. They ranged in age from teens to an 80-year-old. They wrapped more

than 350 gifts and served more than 200 people. "It was wonderful to see the love of God in action," said Rev. Jim Kirkendall, pastor of the congregation. "Praise to God for this opportunity to show His love to others," he added.

This was the first "Servant Evangelism" project of the church, but it won't be the last. Another project is planned for February. [†]

— reported by Pastor Jim Kirkendall



Five of the "Servant Evangelism" gift-wrappers from the Fairless Hills-Levittown Brethren Church are (l. to r.) Judy Kirkendall, Jackie Mentzer, Candace Papieredin, Alice Zimmerman, and Pat McFarland.

### Fourth volume to Brethren Encyclopedia now in progress

**Ashland, Ohio** — Work is progressing on a fourth volume to *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, to supplement the original three volumes completed more than 15 years ago.

The new volume will have three major parts: articles on new developments in the Brethren groups since 1980; corrections to the first three volumes; and a comprehensive index of all four volumes. Topics for new articles were assigned in 1997, and most have been completed. A number of Brethren Church people wrote articles.

Carl Bowman, sociology professor at Bridgewater College, and Donald Durnbaugh, Brethren historian and archivist at Juniata College, are serving as co-editors. Bradley Weidenhamer and Dale Stoffer represent The Brethren Church on the Editorial Board.

Brethren can assist with this project in several ways. First, if you are aware of any corrections or additions that need to be made to the first three volumes, please contact either Bradley Weidenhamer or Dale Stoffer at Ashland Theological Seminary.

Second, consider making a donation to help defray costs of publishing the fourth volume. Congregations or individuals that contribute \$1,000 will receive a complimentary set of the four volumes, and those that contribute \$500 will receive a copy of the fourth volume. Pledges and contributions may be sent to Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., at the address below.

Third, if you do not own *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, consider purchasing all four volumes. Or purchase volume four if you already have the rest of the set. For information, contact Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 313 Fairview Ave., Ambler, PA 19002-4307. [†]

# County Line Brethren Church says farewell as Pastor Carl M. Phillips enters chaplaincy

**Lakeville, Ind. —**

The members of the County Line Brethren Church held a surprise dinner on November 1 for Pastor Carl M. Phillips and his family. It was a time to express appreciation to Pastor Phillips for his eight years of excellent service to the church and to wish him and his family well as Pastor Phillips takes up his new calling as a chaplain in the Air Force.

A family in the church invited Rev. Phillips, his wife Deanna, and their children to go for a drive and then for dinner on Sunday evening, November 1. While the two families were enjoying the drive, church



*Denise Ford (r.), an Air Force veteran, introduces future Chaplain Carl Phillips to the rigors of military life.*

members and friends were gathering in the church basement to prepare a carry-in dinner and the special occasion.

At 5:00 p.m. the two families returned to the church building, where



**Rajahmundry, India —** Brethren missionaries Nirmala and K. Prasanth Kumar stand beside a new van recently acquired by Brethren Mission in India. The van was purchased with money donated by the Central District Mission Board of The Brethren Church in the U.S.A. According to Dr. Kumar, the new van is a Tempo Traveller. Tempos are manufactured in India and are built tough to withstand the punishment of the rough Indian roads. Brethren Mission will use the van for a variety of purposes—conveying people and equipment to evangelistic campaigns and training seminars, transporting building teams to church and prayer hut building sites, and taking the World Relief-sponsored mobile medical clinic to the villages.



Carl and Deanna were blindfolded and led into the basement. When the blindfolds were removed, the first thing they saw was the entire congregation standing at attention, greeting them with a full military salute.

Then Denise Ford, an Air Force veteran, endeavored to introduce Pastor Phillips to the basic requirements of military life—standing at attention, marching, listening to the instructions of the drill master, and, of course, doing push-ups for any violation of proper procedure. Only when Pastor Phillips had become proficient in the drill was everyone allowed to eat. The excellent and bountiful meal was worth waiting for and was enjoyed by all.

After the meal, a contest was held to see who could make a paper plane that would fly the farthest. Then James Ford, moderator of the congregation, presented the Phillips family with a money tree. And Jill Anderson gave a very gifted presentation of the song "Thank you" by Ray Boltz. There were many tears as the congregation and pastoral family said farewell.

On December 15 the Phillips family moved to Belleville, Ill., where Rev. Phillips begins his training to become a chaplain.

— reported by Helen Dickson

## In Memory

**Robert J. "Mac" McKinney, 79,** a member since 1957 of the Tucson, Ariz., First Brethren Church, died October 19, 1998. He served the church faithfully in many capacities—as deacon, trustee, and on the Southwest District camp committee. He was also a member for several years of the national Missionary Board of the Brethren Church. A memorial service was held October 23 at the Tucson First Brethren Church with Pastor Roger Stogsdill officiating. [¶]





## World Relief success story: Children saved in Cambodia

**Wheaton, Ill.** — U.S. churches successfully salvaged a program that ministers to Cambodian children, thus saving the lives of an estimated 4,000 children over the next four years.

Last year, World Relief was ready to begin work in an area of Cambodia with high childhood death rates. But a coup in Cambodia led the U.S. government to temporarily withhold new grants in aid for that country. As a result, World Relief did not receive expected funds, and it appeared the program would falter.

But instead, American churches, responding to a challenge from World Relief president Clive Calver, raised \$261,000 to ensure that the program could begin, so that hundreds of children would not die while the program sat on hold for a year.

With some stability returning to Cambodia's political scene, World Relief recently received the delayed \$1 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to carry on the work already well underway, thanks to U.S. churches. "In this instance, churches have shown just how large a difference we can make when we stand together," Clive Calver said.

The goal of the program is to reduce deaths and disease among 27,149 children and 14,347 mothers in the Cambodian province of Kompong Cham. Part of the four-year agreement with USAID is that World Relief raise an additional \$383,000 from other sources.

World Relief belongs to the 43,000 churches that make up the National Association of Evangelicals. The 120 congregations of The Brethren Church are among that 43,000. Brethren contributions to World Relief help support life-saving programs like this one in Cambodia. [✚]

## Brethren Church in Argentina uses funds from World Relief to aid victims of floods

**Buenos Aires, Argentina** — The Brethren Church in Argentina has been helping to meet the needs of some of the many thousands of people in Argentina whose lives were devastated by floods that occurred during the early months of 1998. Señor José Rivero, President of the National Committee of the Argentine Brethren Church, reports on their relief efforts, which were made possible by a grant of \$49,240 from World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals.

Sr. Rivero applied for funds from World Relief while he was in the United States last summer for the Brethren World Assembly and for General Conference. World Relief provided an initial amount of \$15,000 in August. Shortly after he returned to Argentina following General Conference, Sr. Rivero traveled to Villa Constitucion in Santa Fe Province (one of four provinces hit by flooding) to coordinate the relief effort.

He reports that the leaders of the Brethren churches there, with the help of other brethren, worked long hours preparing food, selecting clothes and shoes, and directing deliveries. As a result, thousands of needy people were helped. The merchants in that area were moved by their example. Not only did they offer the best possible prices for food and other necessities, but they also facilitated deliveries, provided vehicles and personnel, and added their own donations to the purchases. In addition to the funds from World Relief, evangelical literature valued at \$2,550 was received from the National Bible Society. This literature was handed out at every opportunity.

Relief efforts were also carried out in Corrientes Province, where a Committee of Pastors for Aid to Flood Victims used World Relief funds to purchase food, clothes, shoes, and construction materials for distribution. On December 3 the relief efforts got a boost from the Argentine Coast Guard. The Coast Guard provided two launches and four guardsmen to operate them.

The launches were used to transport aid to flood victims living on islands and other areas cut off by the floods. Sr. Rivero notes that he had the "opportunity" to spend a 14-hour day helping with this project.

Sr. Rivero has received positive feedback from local political leaders, top officers in the Coast Guard, and local merchants, who have all recognized the importance of the aid received from World Relief. They believe that these relief efforts were successful in averting outbreaks of violence that would probably have occurred because of the distress that so many people were suffering.

Sr. Rivero writes, "The Brethren Church from the U.S.A. together with Argentina has received an important contribution from World Relief, which has permitted the coordination of this social assistance activity, with such positive results." [✚]

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# The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 121, No. 2

A newsletter for Brethren people

February 1999

## Making Every Day Valentine's Day

By G. Emery Hurd

**THIS IS THE MONTH** in which we celebrate Valentine's Day, that wonderful opportunity we have to tell the people who matter to us most how much we care for them. Isn't it odd that we need a day on which to do this? On the other hand, when we consider what a fast-paced world we live in, maybe it isn't so odd after all.

It is so easy for us to think that a brief smile, a few minutes of hectic conversation, a quick "I love you" as we walk out the door are enough to keep a relationship going. The high rate of divorce, the increase in violence all around us, the unhappiness of so many people every day make the point that we need a Valentine's Day. That way at least once a year we are prompted to say something nice to others.

The Apostle Paul talks about love in this way: *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality* (Rom. 12:9-13, *NIV*).

Paul says that love must be **sincere**. What does he mean by that? Webster says that sincere means "being in inward reality or intent the same as in outward appearance." So being sincere means that we intentionally act the way we intentionally feel and believe.

Do you remember when you were a child and you gave a Valentine's card to every student in your class? Was that sincere? Remember when you told your son or daughter that



you would play with them *some-time*? Was that sincere? Remember when your spouse tried to talk to you, and you said you were listening but continued to watch television at the same time? Was that sincere?

### Requirements of sincere love

Sincere love *takes time*. There is no such thing as *quality time* without lots of *quantity time*. Sincere love also takes planning. We need to schedule time for our spouse, our children, and God. If we don't plan our lives so that we can spend blocks of time regularly with God, spouse, and children, we may say we love them, but are we sincere?

Sincere love *takes energy*. Loving someone well is hard work. Scripture says we must be devoted to one another, honor one another, exhibit joy, patience, and faithfulness. We must be as intentional about loving people as we are about loving the stuff around us. Isn't it amazing that God calls us to love people and use things, but that we do just the opposite? Sincere love is not some warm, mushy feeling. It is an act of the will, a decision to make the effort and

take the time to care, even when doing so isn't easy or convenient.

Sincere love *takes practice*. Paul says that we should practice hospitality. Hospitality doesn't come naturally to most of us. We have to make an effort. It's like learning a new habit. We must intentionally choose to say the words and do the acts of kindness in order to communicate our love in a relationship.

Sincere love also means sacrifice. For our Lord, sacrifice meant dying on the cross. For us, sacrifice generally means far less. It may mean giving up a golf game or a favorite TV program. We say we love, but how much are we willing—*really willing*—to sacrifice for those we love? We live in a selfish world, and it is so easy for us to become selfish as well. We end up substituting cheap platitudes and cards for real love.

I encourage each of us to see Valentine's Day not as a day on which to remember those we love, **but as a day to remind us that we need to love them every day!** [✠]

*Rev. Hurd is pastor of the Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church. This article appeared in the February 1997 issue of his church's newsletter and is reprinted here with his permission.*

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## Constructing a denominational data bank of abilities and skills

*All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the LORD has commanded.* (Exodus 35:10)

When we read in Exodus 35 of the construction of the Tabernacle and in Nehemiah chapters 3-5 of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, one thing is amazingly clear: even the manual work of God requires the use of many diverse skills, talents, and gifts in order for the work to be completed. The National Laymen's Organization of The Brethren Church would like to help this biblical practice become an integral part of ministry among the Brethren. A denomination-wide data bank is to be constructed containing the names and skills of men and women willing to make themselves available for a cooperative labor ministry. This information will allow Brethren to rally around the call for help that we all need from time to time.

The following information is needed in order to construct the data bank. If you would like to participate in this ministry, please fill out this form. (You must be at least 12 years of age.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Church and District: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of days you might be available to work in a year: \_\_\_\_\_ Are you retired? Yes No (circle one)

### Your Abilities and Skill Levels

Use checkmarks (✓) to indicate your abilities, then circle one of the numbers to indicate your skill level in each ability. Use these criteria to determine your skill level: 1 = professional (licensed) with leadership ability; 2 = highly skilled with leadership ability; 3 = highly skilled; 4 = can work with minimal guidance; 5 = can work with guidance.

___ Rough carpentry	1 2 3 4 5	___ Finish carpentry	1 2 3 4 5	___ Electrical	1 2 3 4 5
___ HVAC	1 2 3 4 5	___ Plumbing	1 2 3 4 5	___ Labor	1 2 3 4 5
___ Roofing	1 2 3 4 5	___ Cement/concrete	1 2 3 4 5	___ Masonry	1 2 3 4 5
___ Landscaping	1 2 3 4 5	___ Laying carpet	1 2 3 4 5		

### Equipment operator and other abilities: (write in ability and circle level of skill)

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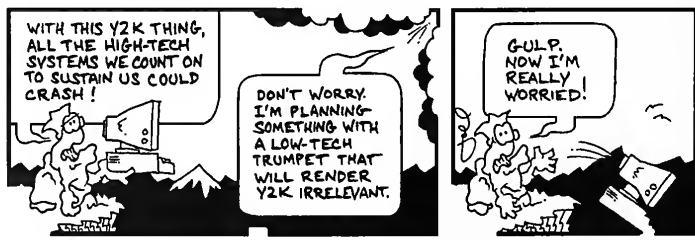
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### Pontius Puddle



© Joel Kaufmann

# Love for a Lifetime

By Dan Lawson

*If a couple has been married for more than five years, any persistent disharmony in their marriage is usually attributed to the husband's lack of understanding and applying genuine love.*

Gary Smalley

**H**ARMONY IN MARRIAGE can be defined as the absence of any unsettled offenses between husband and wife. Notice that it does not mean the absence of offenses, but the absence of any *unsettled* offenses.

Arguments in marriage may come and go, but that does not mean that they have been settled. One husband commented that when he and his wife disagree, she becomes *historical*. I said, "Don't you mean hysterical?" He said, "No, I mean historical. She dredges up all of the arguments we have ever had." This illustrates the fact that arguments will come back to haunt us if we do not resolve our differences.

## Be kind one to another

The Apostle Paul tells us to *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you* (Eph 4:31, 32). This means that we need to be patient with one another in order to resolve our conflicts, even if there are repeated offenses.

Occasionally, when I have an early-morning meeting, I leave the house before my wife gets up. When my wife sees me later in the day, she will greet me with that inevitable question, "Did you wear *THAT* today?" Her reference is always to some combination of stripes and plaids that I picked out that morning. This has happened

so frequently that I have often been tempted to respond sarcastically, "No, Honey, I saw you coming, so I ran upstairs and put this on just to tick you off!" I am happy to say that wisdom has always gotten the better of me, and my response is usually a casual, "Yeah, what's wrong with it?"



She immediately asks, "Who were you with today?" When I reply, she immediately goes to the desk and begins to write notes of apology to all the people I may have encountered: *Dear so and so, Please forgive Dan for his appearance today. He left the house before I could dress him.*

I am happy to say that we laugh about these situations. At the same time, I have to admit that my wife has resorted to putting little identification tags on my clothes so that I can tell which shirts go with what pants.

## Respect one another

In Ephesians 5:29, the Apostle Paul exhorts us: *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.* It is not enough simply to stop saying hurtful and

argumentative things to one another. In marriage we need to make it a constant practice to say things to each other that are positive and uplifting. No other person, including yourself, should receive more consideration and respect from you than the consideration and respect that you show to your spouse. What this means is that in all we say and do, we must put Christ first, spouse second, others third, and self last.

## What would Jesus do?

Recently the phrase "What would Jesus do?" has popped up everywhere—on everything from billboards to bracelets. It is a great concept. It reminds us that in every situation we should stop and ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do if He were in my place."

This same concept should be adapted and applied to marriage. In every situation we should also stop and ask ourselves, "What would my spouse think about this?"

This simple practice can work wonders as a means of keeping our marriages in perspective. Not only should we conduct ourselves in such a way as to please Christ, but also in such a way as to promote ever-increasing confidence in us by our spouse. Our every word and action should seek to prove that we are worthy not only of Christ's love, but also the love of our mate.

My wife jokingly reminds me what my priorities should be when she tells me, "Honey, if your eye offends me, I'll pluck it out." This is her sweet little way of letting me know that, after my devotion to Christ, she should be first in my heart.

When we do everything in our power to keep these two priorities straight in our marriages—Christ first, spouse second—the only outcome can be a beautiful, lasting love that fills a lifetime. [✠]

*Dr. Lawson is senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. This is one in a series of articles in which he applies Bible truths to our personal lives.*

# The Church's Role in Y2K

By Richard Winfield, Editor

**T**WO ARTICLES in last month's issue of the *EVANGELIST* dealt with the Year 2000 computer problem—often called the Y2K problem or simply Y2K. Briefly stated, the problem is that many computers and computer software applications are not capable of recognizing the year 2000.

If the problem is not solved by the end of this year, governments, banks, major corporations, small businesses, and other entities dependent on computers could be crippled. This could possibly result in electric power outages, breakdown of communications, and disruption of the supply chain that transports food and other material goods to local stores.

The second article in last month's issue, "How to prepare for Y2K," looked at ways we as individuals can prepare for disruptions that may occur because of the Y2K problem. But what about churches—local congregations? Do they have a role to play in dealing with the Y2K problem. I believe that they do.

## Caring for itself

First of all, a local congregation will want to look at its own needs. If the church has computers, these will need to be checked to make sure that they and the software they use are Y2K compliant. Otherwise, valuable membership records, financial data, and other information could be lost. In some cases, a church may need to buy a new computer and/or updated software.

The phone system, copier, and other pieces of electronic equipment (including electronic thermostats) may need to be checked to determine if they rely on date-sensitive embedded computer chips for their operation. Church boards need to be prepared to make the outlay of money that this will require. (If it's any comfort, AT&T spent \$100 million in 1997 alone in an attempt to

fix its problem.) Also, as a precaution, the church should make printed copies of critical documents, membership lists, etc., that could be lost if computers fail.

## Caring for members

Having looked to its own affairs, the local church also has a responsibility to its members. At the very least, church members should be



alerted that potential problems exist and encouraged to become informed and to take appropriate action (much as I suggested in last month's article). Church leaders need to recognize, however, that not everyone in the congregation has the means, time, and ability to study this issue. Furthermore, more information about Y2K is being made available than any one person can read, let alone absorb.

Therefore, the church should consider setting up a Y2K study committee to research the issue and to share information with members. This committee should read widely and attempt to present a balanced point of view. The Internet website *Christian Y2K* warns, "Be very careful in evaluating claims of parties who claim either final wisdom

or divine revelation about Y2K. Christians who make specific predictions connecting current events to Bible prophecy place the credibility of the Gospel at risk."

But providing information may not be enough. As this committee studies the issue, it may become convinced that action is necessary. In such a case, the church may want to take the next step and establish a Y2K preparedness committee. The purpose of this committee would be threefold: (1) to advise members on how to prepare; (2) to provide help to those members (the elderly, handicapped, and people of limited means) who are unable to prepare on their own; and (3) to organize the church itself as a relief center to help those in need. (For example, the church might want to store water and set up a food bank, if doing so is deemed necessary.)

In doing its work, this committee will want to draw on the skills and resources of the members of the congregation. For example, if it appears that water will be a problem, the committee might want to find members who have wells and consider installing hand pumps.

## Caring for the community

The church also needs to look beyond itself and its members to the community of which it is a part. This is best done by working with other churches in the community through the local ministerial association or fellowship of churches, if these exist.

There are several advantages to working with other churches. More can be accomplished through a cooperative effort. A combined effort helps to eliminate redundancy. For example, it would be better for one or two representatives of the ministerial association to contact area utilities to see if they are Y2K compliant rather than for a representative from every local church to make that contact. And an association of churches has more clout in encouraging community action than one church would have.

Such a group might want to work with community leaders in setting up an emergency center where people can gather if electric goes off resulting in lack of heat in homes.

(Obviously, such a center would need its own generator and heat source.) Representatives of this association of churches might also want to meet with administrators of local nursing homes to see if they are prepared for Y2K and to find out how churches can help.

### Caring for spiritual needs

The church should also see Y2K as an opportunity to meet the spiritual needs of those outside the church. Many people are concerned about what will happen to them and their families at the beginning of next year. Fear, uncertainty, and the possibility of food and water shortages are causing people to look for answers. Someone has suggested that Y2K could cause more people to be receptive to the message of the

church than any other event in the last 100 years.

In our attempts to minister to the unchurched, we must be careful, however, that we do not contribute to the fear and uncertainty people are already experiencing. Steve Hewitt, editor of *Christian Computing* magazine, blames some in the church for sensationalizing Y2K. He says, "While Christian leadership is not solely responsible for spreading the Y2K fear, they are the leaders." Elsewhere Hewitt warns that "we will not see a REAL revival [in our nation] by using outdated Y2K facts to try to scare everyone to church!"

We can minister most effectively to the spiritual needs of others in three ways: (1) by our calm assurance that God will see us through this crisis; (2) by sharing with them

how they can have this assurance by trusting in God; (3) by demonstrating Christ's love in tangible ways by helping to meeting their physical needs if such help is needed.

Former Brethren missionary Jan Solomon, who has studied Y2K extensively, sums it up well. She writes, "The Brethren have historically been known as a people who lend a hand of mercy in troubled times. By preparing in advance [for Y2K], we, along with other community churches and organizations, can put ourselves in a position to help with spiritual as well as physical needs. And what a joy it would be, if the crisis is not as serious as the experts anticipate, to be able to give [unused Y2K emergency supplies] to those in need, who are, as Jesus said, "always among us." [✠]

## Exposing

# Four Myths About Lay Ministry

By Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch

IN THE 1950s, Elton Trueblood wrote, "If the average church should suddenly take seriously the notion that every laymember—man or woman—is really a minister of Christ, we could have something like a revolution in a very short time."\*

A growing number of churches are now experiencing this revolution. But in most churches, most members still don't see themselves as ministers. As a result, church staff are overburdened while many members feel sidelined.

What is keeping Trueblood's revolution from sweeping through all our churches? For centuries, the church has divided Christians into two distinct groups—the ministers (clergy) and those ministered to (laity). This division has been maintained by four *ministry* myths—unbiblical beliefs about ministry that have shaped how most Christians approach ministry. Before the revolution

can come to your church, these four ministry myths must be exposed and corrected.

### MYTH #1:

#### Ministry is just for "ministers"

God calls certain people to positions of church leadership, and their role is essential. But in describing the call of leaders, Scripture doesn't single them out as the "ministers." Rather, it emphasizes the ministry of all believers: "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers, to *equip the saints for the work of ministry*" (Eph. 4: 12, NRSV, emphasis added).

Our friend Mark knew that all Christians are called to minister, but he bought into the version of this myth that says that God can best use those in *professional* ministry. Wanting God's best, he quit his job, went to seminary, then joined a church staff.

In his new job, Mark quickly discovered that his gift was not administration. "I'm most effective in one-

on-one ministry," he explains. "And rather than coordinating existing ministries, I'd rather be bringing new people in. I thought joining a church staff would give me more freedom, but in reality it limited how much time I could spend doing what I do best." Even though he knew some people would think he was settling for "God's second best," Mark resigned from the church staff and went into insurance.

"Though I didn't realize it when I started," Mark says, "insurance is a perfect job for someone who wants to work with hurting people. Whenever a client loses a spouse, I get a phone call. When any of my clients divorce, they come to me to change their insurance papers. And whenever one of them has a car accident, a fire, or a serious illness covered by insurance, the client comes to see me. Just a few weeks ago I told my wife that I've never before felt God using me in ministry like I have lately."

Only when Mark understood that God could use him more effectively in the business world than on a church staff was God able to put Mark's ministry gifts to fullest use.

### MYTH #2:

#### Ministry refers only to meeting spiritual needs

When I (Eddy) was in college, I would sometimes go to a park on (continued on page 7)

\*Elton Trueblood, *Your Other Vocation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p 9.



## Brethren Church 1999 Summer Ministries

**WHAT WILL YOU DO** this summer to change someone's life? No answer? Then let me give you some help. This year The Brethren Church Summer Ministries Program is offering a variety of opportunities which will not only change another person's life, but will also change yours forever!

Imagine yourself on an Apache reservation in Arizona witnessing to a Native American child who has never heard of Jesus Christ, and then lending your hand to a construction project on the reservation. Or picture yourself on the historic battlefields of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, fighting a battle against homelessness and poverty. These and many other opportunities await you!

In addition to short-term missions trips, the Summer Ministries Program also offers work trips, summer internships, National Ministry teams, District Crusader teams, and opportunities to work with Spearhead in Mexico. These opportunities are not just for young people! Adults are more than welcome to participate in the internship program, and also in the short-term missions and work trips! Team leaders, who must be at least 22 years old, are also needed for some trips.

### Short Term Missions and Work Trips

**Baja Peninsula, Mexico, July 8-20.** In conjunction with Missions Travel Network and Gospel Recordings, you can travel to Mexico, where you will be trained as a pioneer diagnostician. You will take Gospel Recordings (and in some cases wind-up tape players) to indigenous

people groups who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ! This trip is open to anyone who has completed 7th grade. The cost is only \$790, which includes airfare.

**Mexico City, Mexico, dates to be announced.** Working in cooperation with Brethren Missionaries Todd and Tracy Ruggles and also Brethren Spearhead team leader Jennifer Thomas, members of this team will share their faith with Mexican families and children. Drama, puppet ministries, and films will be used to minister to people in Mexico City. The team will also work on a construction project. This trip is for anyone who has completed 10th grade and older. The cost of this trip has yet to be determined.

**Jamaica, July 5-16.** For this trip, we will partner with Christian Service International to send a team to witness in Jamaica. The team will help with a vacation Bible school and also do street evangelism, reaching between 1,200 and 1,500 children with the Gospel. The cost of this trip will be \$770 plus airfare. It is open to anyone who has completed 10th grade. For an additional \$235, you can opt to stay until July 19 for some relaxation on the beautiful beaches in Ocho Rios.

**Washington, D.C., June 15-20.** This trip will expose team members to the inner city culture of Washington, D.C. Working in conjunction with Dr. Rickey Bolden and Southeast Christian Fellowship (Brethren Church), you will minister to the homeless and the lost. Team members will also have time to visit the many tourist sights in this famous

city. This trip is open to anyone who has completed 9th grade. The cost has yet to be determined.

**Canyon Day, Arizona, June 20-27.** Working in conjunction with Forward Edge, this team will serve on the White Mountain Apache Reservation in Canyon Day, Arizona. Team members will help with construction of a Sunday school building and also work with a vacation Bible school. This trip is open to anyone who has completed 8th grade. It will cost \$350 plus airfare.

**Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 11-17.** This team will work in conjunction with REACH Workcamps to battle hopelessness and poverty on the famous Civil War battlefields of this town. Activities will include street evangelism, drama, puppet ministry, and work projects. The trip is open to anyone who has completed 7th grade. It will cost \$320 plus transportation.

### Young Adult Ministries Interns

If you would like a more in-depth experience than a short term missions trip, this is the program for you! Spend at least five weeks serving a local church or camp and experiencing ministry hands-on, on a day-to-day basis. Interns must have completed their senior year of high school and will generally be paid a small stipend for their service.

### National Ministry Teams

These teams will bring back to life the rich tradition of National Crusaders. Teams will serve for at least five weeks ministering in churches, camps, and communities. This option is open to anyone who has completed high school.

### District Crusaders

District Crusaders are young people 15 to 18 years of age who have completed their sophomore, junior, or senior year of high school. They will minister within their home district for at least two weeks. This is a great way to see what summer ministry is all about!

### Spearhead

Learn the language and culture of Mexico as you minister to the people  
*(continued on next page)*

## Myths About Lay Ministry

(continued from page 5)

Sunday afternoons with a few friends and we would approach strangers with *The Four Spiritual Laws*, a booklet that explains how to become a Christian. A half dozen or so of the people I talked to prayed the sinner's prayer, and one of them even came to church services for a few months afterward.

In time, however, I grew uneasy with this cold-turkey witnessing. For one thing, I saw little evidence that it was leading to changed lives. But part of my discomfort, I believe, grew out of my own changing relationship with God. Nurtured by my pastor's sermons, I was seeing God less as a stern judge and more as a loving Father. I began realizing that God is not only concerned about my getting to heaven; He also cares about my joys and pains, my hopes and fears. God doesn't care only about my soul; He cares about me.

The more I experienced God's love, the clearer it became that I was not treating the people in the park the way God treated me. I was treating them as objects, as trophies to be won, not as people to be loved.

Somehow I had gotten the idea that ministry involved meeting only—or at least primarily—spiritual needs. Witnessing, preaching, Bible teaching, leading worship—this was ministry. But feeding the hungry? Visiting the sick? They were nice things to do, but hardly ministry.

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there. You will serve the entire summer in Mexico City, where you'll spread the Gospel to the nearly 28 million unchurched people there. Participants must be at least 19 years old and have a great desire to serve Christ in another culture.

The opportunity of a lifetime awaits you. *Don't miss it!* Call Jaime Gillespie at The Brethren Church National Office (419-289-1708) for more information or to request an application form. Then come along and model the power of Jesus Christ through a trait He has called us all to develop: the trait of servanthood. [✠]

But as love replaced law as my motivation for ministry, I started seeing people through new eyes. I became less concerned with persuading others to do the right thing and more interested in helping them. Ministry, I realized, had to be concerned not just with spiritual needs, but with the needs of the whole person. Love doesn't limit itself to caring about one kind of need.

When people believe ministry is restricted to meeting spiritual needs, those whom God has called to meet physical or social needs may conclude that they have no ministry. When this myth is exploded, these people can find their places in the body of Christ.

### MYTH #3:

#### Most ministry takes place when the church is gathered

In some ways the church is like a sales team. When a sales team meets, its members may celebrate accomplishments. Sales managers may inspire and motivate the team, give them a vision of what is possible, and provide training. Group members encourage one another. Now what would you think of that sales team if, upon leaving the meeting, the members made little effort to sell? Would you suspect that they missed the point of the meeting?

We in the church are not a sales team, but a ministry team. Yet we gather for many of the same reasons—to celebrate, to expand our vision, to be inspired to fulfill our mission, to give and receive encouragement, and to become equipped for ministry. If then, at the end of our gatherings, we go out into the world but make little attempt to minister, what does that suggest?

Unless we minister as the church scattered the rest of the week, we've missed one of the main points of coming together. As we heard one pastor say, "The church is most the church when the sanctuary is empty."

### MYTH #4:

#### Some Christians are called to do secular work.

The world says there are two kinds of work—sacred and secular. The dictionary defines secular as "not holy" or "not sacred." But the Bible tells us that we are to do everything—

even eating and drinking—to God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31). For Christians, every activity is to be sacred.

If God directs someone to be an auto mechanic, it is because God can use that person to meet needs better as an auto mechanic than as a pastor or missionary. Every Christian is called to full-time Christian ministry.

Any Christian can change a legitimate "secular" job into a ministry by approaching that job with a commitment to meeting people's needs as an expression of God's love. God does not call anyone to do "secular" (unholy) work. He calls us all to honor Him and to minister to people's needs through whatever work we do.

### Are you ready to join?

Once our understanding of ministry is broad enough, we can then discover which particular part of Christ's mission God is calling us to do. Two invaluable clues to help us determine our call are pain and joy.

**Pain:** Where do you mourn with Jesus for the pain in the world?

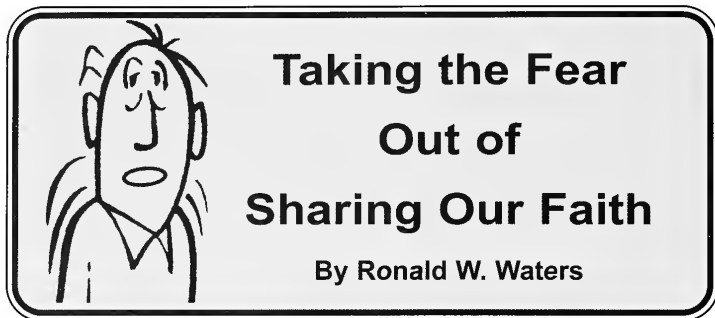
**Joy:** What would bring you joy in that painful situation?

When you can answer those questions, you have probably found your call. As Frederick Buechner says, "The place God calls you to is where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."\*

Once the church explodes these four myths about ministry myths, helps members identify their calls to ministry, then supports them in creatively fulfilling those calls, we will, as Trueblood predicted, experience something like a revolution in a very short time. In fact, the revolution has already begun. Has it come to your church? [✠]

*Adapted by Eddy Hall from The Lay Ministry Revolution: How You Can Join by Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch (Baker Books). Mr. Hall of Goessel, Kans., is a consultant who helps churches maximize their ministries through integrated strategic planning of ministries, staffing, facilities, and finances. Gary Morsch, of Olathe, Kans., is chairman of Heart to Heart International, a volunteer organization that mobilizes community resources to alleviate world suffering.*

\*Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 95.



## Taking the Fear Out of Sharing Our Faith

By Ronald W. Waters

**M**ANY BELIEVERS are intimidated—even overwhelmed—by the thought of sharing their faith. It is something they simply cannot do. Unfortunately, that is because most of us have a stereotypical view of what evangelism should look like. We envision an “in your face” approach that is offensive and “just not my style.”

Instead, we should approach faith-sharing in ways that are consistent with our personalities. In their book, *Becoming a Contagious Christian* (Zondervan, 1994), Bill Hybels and Mark Mittleberg have identified six personal styles and how they may be used in evangelism. I have adapted them here and have suggested some approaches to faith-sharing based on each style. Which two or three of these styles most closely matches your personality?

### “I’ll serve you”

Perhaps you have a servant’s heart and you find that doing acts of kindness for others is your natural style. Deeds of kindness need to be accompanied by words of faith. But showing God’s love in practical ways with no strings attached is a good way to soften the hearts of unbelievers, helping them to become more open to Christ and the church.

You may do good deeds on your own, such as sharing baked goods with a neighbor or shoveling someone’s sidewalk. Or you may do them as part of a “conspiracy of kindness”—regular servant-evangelism projects in your community planned by your church. (See the book by this title by Steve Sjögren: *Vine Books*, 1993.) In either case, without being overbearing, make sure that the person knows you are doing this

good deed to show the love of God. Otherwise, the kindness calls attention to you instead of to Christ.

### “Come with me”

You may have a knack for inviting others to take part in an activity with you, be it going to the mall, out to eat, or to a church activity especially geared for communicating the gospel. If this is your style, watch for specific opportunities to invite persons to join you in church or area activities where they may hear the Good News of faith in Jesus Christ.

Churches should plan two or more events each year to which believers can invite unchurched or unsaved friends. These events should be attractive, of high quality, and designed so as not to embarrass the guest or the one extending the invitation. Events might include a Christian concert, a block party, a family fun night, a movie with a message, or a special speaker who shares the gospel while addressing a life need.

### “Here’s my story”

All Christians should be prepared to share their testimony, but a person with this style may be especially effective at telling how Christ impacts his or her daily life. You do not have to have a dramatic or a “how-God-took-me-out-of-the-gutter” story in order to use this style effectively. Most people’s lives are rather common and mundane. They want to know how following Jesus Christ makes a difference in daily living.

You might want to use this style by writing an account of your faith journey. More likely you will use this style in casual, day-to-day conversation by telling how the Lord is at work in your life.

### “I love you”

You may be a person who makes friends easily and who really cares about other people. If so, your interpersonal style will lend itself to a friendship or relational approach to evangelism. Rather than approaching total strangers, you may focus primarily on sharing your faith within relationships you already have with friends, relatives, work or leisure associates, or neighbors. Or you may look for opportunities to intentionally build relationships with another in the hope of seeing that person come to faith in Christ.

Much relational evangelism takes place in the course of daily life—sharing over the backyard fence, around the coffee pot, or over lunch. The challenge of relational evangelism is to remember to watch for and use opportunities to talk about the faith. It is also important to build genuine friendships, not the kind that merely has an agenda for witnessing.

### “Please consider this”

If you have a logical mind and a desire to dig deep into philosophical and theological matters, an intellectual approach may fit your style. A person with this style will study carefully the subject of apologetics and will be prepared to help others find answers to their serious questions about the faith.

This style lends itself to debate, but it should never be argumentative. It might include studying a book with a seeker, such as Lee Strobel’s *The Case for Christ* (Zondervan, 1998) or Ken Boa and Larry Moody’s *I’m Glad You Asked* (Chariot Victor, 1994). You should expect many long and loving conversations to help a person who has intellectual objections and misconceptions come to a reasoned faith in Christ.

### “Are you saved?”

This is the style often associated with evangelism. While confrontational, this style need not be offensive or involve “button-holing” people to make them listen to the gospel against their will. Rather, this style recognizes the importance of telling the Good News of Jesus

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## An evangelism success story

By Doug Cunningham

*Personal evangelism is neither easy nor immediate. It often requires an extended time of contact and a variety of approaches. But if we patiently persist, sometimes we have the joy of leading a person to Christ. This is well-illustrated by the following account.*

**R**OGER AND I began working at a hardware store about the same time. He was a high school senior, and I was married with three children. I took little notice of him at first, and later, when I did, I thought that he had a chip on his shoulder. We didn't speak.

### Contact

Then one day I saw Roger wearing a Ruger t-shirt (the name of a popular gun manufacturer). About a week later, I asked him about the shirt. He said something (I don't remember what), and that was the end of the conversation. Following another week or two, I asked Roger if he owned a Ruger, noting that I

had once owned one. He said he did, but that he didn't get to hunt very often. Thus a conversation began between us and a common interest was discovered—one small thread that connected us. I prayed.

The hardware store had a sporting goods section, and a month later I sold a customer a gun. I don't know where the idea came from (or do I?), but the next time I saw Roger I mentioned that I had sold a gun. He asked me a question or two—"Which gun? To whom?" I answered. And that was about it.

### Conversation

I sold four or five guns over the next several months, and every time I did I told Roger about it. That always resulted in a few moments of conversation between us. Thus began a relationship that would slowly grow and eventually result in a major change in Roger's life.

The next step in our relationship was initiated by Roger. He was quiet and a good worker. But occasionally

he would stop in my department for a few minutes. Usually he didn't speak. He would just watch as I restocked my bolt and screw bins or as I wrote up an order. So I would ask him how his day was going or what was new. He would say something—never much—then be on his way.

It was now winter, and I walked to work (about half a mile) through the cold and snow. One evening Roger asked if he could give me a ride home. I said, "Sure," and he did. This happened several times, and as a result our relationship became more comfortable. He even told me about his family situation (his parents were divorced), about his girlfriend, and that he went to church with her from time to time.

### Concern

The time had come. The next time he gave me a lift home, I felt that I had to ask him what would happen to him if he died that night. Where would he spend eternity? He said that he didn't know. I told him that I was in the same boat many years before. And I asked him if he would mind coming to my apartment for a few minutes because I had an illustration I wanted to show him. He said that he had to go, but maybe next time. And next time it was!

When he entered my apartment after that next ride home, I introduced him to my wife and some of my children, and then we sat down at the kitchen table. I presented the gospel to him using a bridge illustration (a deep chasm with humans on one side, God on the other, and a cross-shaped bridge the only means of going from the human side to God's side). I have found this to be a clear and effective method to explain the Gospel, and many others have found the same to be true.

It took about 15 or 20 minutes for me to present the illustration. I asked him questions along the way to make sure he was understanding the Scripture passages and the progression.

### Consideration

When I finished, I asked him which side of the chasm he thought he was on. He said he was on the human side. I then asked if he understood

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Christ directly and in winsome ways that will assure that the person who is not yet a believer will want to listen and respond. If you have an outgoing and engaging personality, this style may suit you best.

Using this style may include one-on-one or group conversations about the gospel, sharing an attractive gospel tract with a friend, or even presenting the gospel before large groups. It presupposes that you have a clear understanding of what it means to become a Christian.

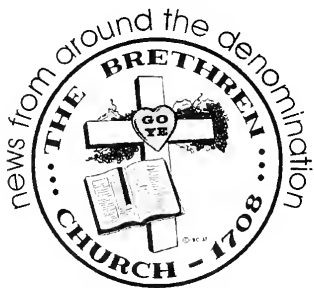
### So What's Your Style?

The key to effective witnessing is to find the style that best fits your personality. Then take the steps necessary to make that style part of your daily life. But regardless of your natural style, be sure

that you can talk about what Christ means to you. We must be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15), even if we are not eloquent or particularly comfortable with verbal presentations.

And team up with others who have different styles. This team effort will allow God's Spirit to use a variety of means to touch the lives of people around you who are dying to know Christ and who are dying without Him. So do it with style—your God-given style for sharing the most important news a person can ever hear! [✠]

*Rev. Waters is Assistant Professor of Evangelism at Ashland Theological Seminary, and he also serves The Brethren Church as Consultant for Evangelism and Church Growth.*



## World Relief rushes aid to Colombian quake victims

**Wheaton, Ill.** — Almost immediately after Colombia's worst earthquake in a century struck that South American country, World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals began rushing emergency food and water to victims of this disaster.

In cooperation with American Airlines, World Relief made an initial delivery of 20,000 pounds of aid to Colombian churches. The churches distributed this aid to refugees in emergency shelters. This shipment of emergency supplies was the beginning of a larger disaster response planned by World Relief.

To get aid to Colombia quickly, World Relief used a collection system it had established in Miami, Fla., which area residents used when Hurricanes Georges and Mitch hit the Caribbean and Central America this past fall.

"Because World Relief's Miami disaster response system is already in place and working rather smoothly, it was only logical that we seize this opportunity to glorify our Heavenly Father and be first to provide some much-needed relief to our many thousands of brothers and sisters in Colombia," said Steve Kabick, World Relief's disaster response coordinator for Miami.

The earthquake struck western Colombia on January 25, devastating 20 towns and villages in five provinces and killing hundreds. Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, was in Medellin, Colombia, when the earthquake struck, but reported only a minor tremor there. [✚]

## "STAKE" tentmakers announce close of church-planting effort in central Florida

**Kissimmee, Fla.** — Enid Schrader and Linda Yoder have announced the close of STAKE, the church-planting effort in the Orlando/Kissimmee, Florida, area. The decision was announced in a letter dated October 30, 1998, and was effective December 31, 1998.

STAKE is an acronym for Saturation of the Target Area for Kingdom Extension. It was a plan developed by the Mission/Outreach Ministry of the Florida District to plant a number of cell churches in the west-coast and central regions of Florida. The plan called for the use of teams of tentmakers to plant these cell churches.

STAKE began in 1994 with nine tentmakers. In the years that followed, this number dwindled until in 1998 only Enid Schrader and Linda Yoder remained.

In their letter, Enid and Linda gave this evaluation of STAKE:

"Some will choose to look at this effort as a failure. We wholeheartedly disagree with that observation.



STAKE tentmakers Linda Yoder (l.) and Enid Schrader.

STAKE has reached out and ministered to many families in this area. We have been blessed to participate in the sowing, watering, and harvesting of lives for Jesus Christ. The work that STAKE has done was not done in vain.

"The other mark of success is in the lives of those who have served with STAKE. The challenges we

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what he needed to do to cross over to God's side. He was not sure, so I repeated the last steps. I asked if it was clear now, and when he said, "Yes," I proceeded to ask him if there was any reason why he should not cross over right now. He hesitated.

I felt he was ready and that he needed to make the decision right then. But he did not feel ready. Something was holding him back, some reason he could not articulate. I was frustrated and greatly disappointed. But if he wasn't ready, I couldn't force Him to accept Christ. It was in God's hands. So I gave him several tracts and urged him to go home, find a quiet place, read them, and consider making a decision.

### Conversion

In my frustration I envisioned that it might be one or two years before Roger would commit his life

to Christ (if ever). I had presented the Gospel to him on a Wednesday night. To my surprise, two days later, on Friday night, Roger went home from work, took a shower, and sat down and read the tracts. Then he prayed, asking Christ to forgive his sin and to enter his life.

As a result, Roger's life began to change. I could see an increasing steadiness in his life. His frustrations began to dissipate, and peace crept in. His dreams for some distant happiness were replaced by a contentment in the present. Christ had indeed come into his heart and changed his life. [✚]

*Mr. Cunningham was living in Ashland, Ohio, when these events took place. He and his family recently moved to Gilbert, Ariz., where they are part of the core group of Oasis Community Church, a new Brethren congregation being planted in the greater Phoenix area. He has a strong commitment to personal evangelism.*



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faced were met with personal growth. The obstacles we overcame gave us more of a desire to serve the Lord. The lives of those around us gave us more of a determination to reach the lost."

Both Enid and Linda asked that Brethren continue to pray for them as they look to the future. Enid indicated that she will be making decisions about moving to another area. Her desire is to continue working in a missions/tentmaking effort. Linda plans to remain in the Kissimmee area until her son Josh graduates from school or until God calls her to another location.

The two tentmakers thanked God for His continual support and love; the Florida District for the opportunity to serve with STAKE; and the Brethren who supported them with their finances and their prayers. They also gave this challenge to the Brethren: "The only thing that you or I can do that matters is to love God with all of our heart and to share Him with others. You do not have to move, establish an organization, or call yourself by any special name. All you have to do is be willing to serve God right where you are. Open your lives to minister to the needs of those around you. That is what STAKE taught us." [✠]

## Jaime L. Gillespie named to new position as Brethren Church National Youth Leader

**Ashland, Ohio** — Jaime L. Gillespie, a member of the Vinco Brethren Church, Mineral Point, Pa., has been called to the new position of National Youth Leader of The Brethren Church.

Ms. Gillespie is no stranger to The Brethren Church National Office, where she began serving full time on January 4. She was the 1998 BYIC Convention Coordinator, which required spending many hours in the National Office from January to August preparing for that event. After the Convention, she continued to work part time at 524 College Ave., assisting with the Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) national program.

In December, Jaime completed her academic work for a Bachelor of Science degree from Ashland University, which she will receive in May. At AU she majored in pre-medicine (biology and athletic training) and minored in chemistry and religion. In conjunction with her major in athletic training, she served as a trainer with various athletic teams during her years at the university. She excelled throughout her university career, earning numerous honors and accolades.

Jaime comes to the position of National Youth Leader with an extensive background in the BYIC program. She grew up in the Vinco Brethren Church, where she participated in the local youth group. She was a Pennsylvania District Crusader in 1993 and 1994; a Summer

Ministries intern in 1995 and 1996; a national B Y I C Steering Committee member from 1993-98; and editor of *Morning Star*, the BYIC



Jaime L. Gillespie

magazine, from 1995-97. Added to all this is her work as the 1998 BYIC Convention coordinator and as BYIC assistant, noted above.

"There were many factors that led to the selection of Jaime as National Youth Leader, but there were two specific areas that impressed me" said Rev. David West, Director of Congregational Ministries, under whose direction Ms. Gillespie will serve. "The first was her dependence upon the leading of the Spirit of God to guide her life choices. Her spiritual maturity far out-distances her young age."

"Secondly," Rev. West continued, "in Jaime we have a servant who has, in every leadership arena, risen to the top and been given decisive leadership roles. In Jaime we do not have a person with leadership potential, we have a leader with great potential."

As National Youth Leader, Ms. Gillespie will provide leadership and vision for the National Youth program of The Brethren Church. Specific responsibilities will include planning and coordinating the National Youth Convention and National Youth Rally; supervising and giving leadership to the Brethren Youth In Christ Steering Committee and Youth Ministry Advisors Group; planning and implementing the Summer Ministries program; and developing programming for BYIC and Young Adult ministries.

"Please be in prayer [for Jaime] as she assumes her new calling and responsibilities," Rev. West added. [✠]

**Twelve Mile, Ind.** — Members of the Corinth Brethren Church dedicated a new parking lot last November 8. As members joined hands to form a large circle around the lot,



Pastor Rod Schuler spoke words of dedication and deacons Fred Easter, Michael Morrow, Kevin Scott, and George Staller offered prayers. Land for the parking lot was donated by Corinth member Mrs. Carl Dillman.

— reported by Viola Peter

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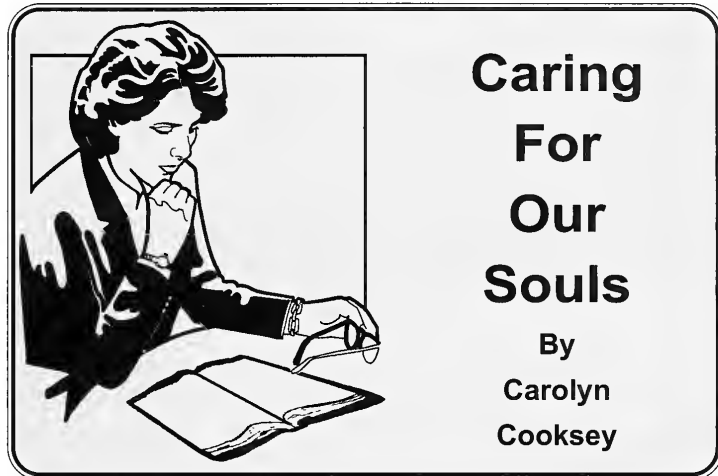
# The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 121, No. 3

A newsletter for Brethren people

March 1999



## Caring For Our Souls

By  
Carolyn  
Cooksey

*The following article is from a presentation Carolyn Cooksey made during a seminar for women at the 1998 General Conference. The theme of the seminar was Luke 10:27—loving the Lord with heart, soul, mind, and strength. Mrs. Cooksey was one of four speakers, and her message focused on loving the Lord with one's soul. The following article is the concluding section of her presentation, which also dealt with "awareness of the soul" and "condition of the soul."*

Mrs. Cooksey, a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, has a deep interest in spiritual formation and the inner life. She is employed as a Library Assistant at Ashland University. Her husband, David, is Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church.

**T**HE SOUL is that spiritual part of us that relates to God and to the things of God. The soul is the inner sanctuary where God meets us and connects with us, the place where we are alone with Him. The soul is not our mind or body or

heart; it is distinct from, yet incorporates all of them.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Our complexity requires care and maintenance. Fortunately, we have an owner's manual, the Word of God. From my study of His Word, the teachings of others, and my personal experience, I have found some important and necessary ways to care for our souls.

### Knowing God

Our souls do not want to know about God; they want to *know God*! Devote yourself to God. Give God your focused, undivided attention. Worship, praise, and adore Him. Believe God; follow Him. Seek friendship with the Soulmaker. In God's presence is fullness of joy (Ps 16:11, *KJV*). Let God work in your life and through your life.

The soul thrives in love. Accept God's furious love for you. Psalm 18:19 teaches that God takes delight in our very existence. We know that God calls each one of us by name; we are precious to Him. We, in turn,

must give Him our furious, unconditional love.

Do some soul-searching. Get to know, honor, and delight in your own soul. The soul longs to be known and loved. Examine your heart and honor yourself in light of God's Word. Accept the gifts He has given you and use them to honor His purpose for you. Psalm 16:7-10 says that God counsels our minds and gladdens our hearts. He is our bodyguard and will keep us from death. Therefore, our souls rejoice!

### The eyes of the soul

Ask God to work in your soul and allow Him to do that work. Ask Him to open the eyes of your soul to see the real Jesus, the Christ of Christianity. Ask God to open your inner eyes to the rich and complex world of the spirit that exists along with our world of technology and activities. After all, we know that all of life at its root is spiritual. Everything we see was formed and is sustained by what we cannot see. Become aware of the huge dimension of reality that often goes unnoticed in the everydayness of our lives. Live the life of the Spirit, not the life of rationalism, activism, emotionalism. Enter instead into the life of God, which is already in motion.

Do those things that nourish and strengthen your soul. Maturation of

*(continued on next page)*

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**The Women's Outlook Newsletter**  
is in the center of this issue

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the body is automatic; development of the soul is not. There are many ways of experiencing spiritual growth, but we must be intentional about using them. Therefore, feed on Scripture. (Here we should all be gluttons!) Read Scripture with a view to the spiritual formation of your soul. Use biblical imagination. Scripture is essential for shaping our souls and bringing them to maturity.

Do not neglect fellowship with other believers. Embrace friends in the faith whenever and wherever you find them. Worship, study, and pray with other Christians. Take Communion with them, for with it comes cleansing, forgiveness, and restorative powers that connect body, mind, heart, and soul with the wine and bread of Christianity.

Find or make a place for yourself—a place of sacred retreat. I've had various places at various times—a room, a closet, a corner, a chair. Arrange a setting (our souls delight in beauty). It might be a view out a window, a piece of art (a picture or a statue), or something from nature (shells, leaves, flowers). Use music, music that leads your attention upward for worship or that leads you inward into silence.

### Spiritual disciplines

Practice spiritual disciplines, those exercises that strengthen your soul and keep it in optimal health. They include silence, solitude, fasting, simplicity, meditation, and prayer. Like the more difficult physical exercises, the more difficult spiritual exercises will benefit our souls the most. Find out what exercises do your soul the most good, then practice them.

A word about silence and solitude:

these two exercises are especially important to our spiritual well-being. They call us from the busyness and drivenness (even laziness) of our lives so that we can hear our deepest longings and listen to the voice of God. As the body needs rest and sleep each day, so the soul has a daily need for silence and solitude. A daily practice of ten minutes of silence and solitude is minimal.

### Make time for your soul

Honor your inner longings. We tend to ignore them. Make time—morning, noon, or night, whatever is best for you—to care for your soul. Seek the sacred in everyday life. Just as our minds take in and digest ideas to produce intelligence, so the soul takes in and digests the deeper things of life, producing wisdom and character. Live the Christian life, don't just think about it. Our faith is lived in the ordinary, daily, messiness of life.

Listen to the call of the outdoors. Enjoy your surroundings. Gaze at sunsets, at stars. Surround yourself with music. Experience the reality of doing dishes, hanging up clothes, baking bread, cooking. Look at the ordinary with sacred eyes. Take time out of the rush of practical life to contemplate timeless and eternal realities. Retreat for a while. Leisure time, well spent, is usually good soul time. Jesus said, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while" (Mark 6:31, RSV). Do it, hourly, daily, or whenever.

Reach out to others in fellowship and service. Find a spiritual community, friends on the same journey, a church of God-centered, soul-conscious people who promote health, renewal, and growth. Serve others. Give of your time and energy. Be an

open and loving person. Learn to listen—to your own soul, to life, and to others. Listening is a sign of spiritual health and vitality.

Turn to others for love and comfort—lean on them for awhile. In soul-shaking times—when you are in need, hurting, wounded, broken, depressed, grieving—remember that tears soften the soul. Tears make our souls receptive and alive. They are like medicine, restoring our souls to their true selves. Do it with others!

Do not give in to lies, denials, or avoidance. Hypocrisy, moral compromise, and falsity destroy the soul. Love and honor others. Look for mature guides and wise leaders. Surround yourself, whenever possible, with people who strengthen your soul. And share your soul with others. How often does your soul have an opportunity to touch another soul? Always. A word of encouragement, a few dollars to help someone get through tough times, a prayer with someone who's hurting, a visit, a meal, a hand of sympathy—these are the things that the soul is made of and made by.

### A continuous process

Soul-building is a process—a living, continuous process. It doesn't happen overnight and it is never finished. It takes a lifetime. It requires stretching, struggling with unknown and invisible forces. It is hard to love the Lord with all of our souls and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

What is the status of your soul? Visualize your soul as it is. Then visualize it renewed and full of joy. Visualize your soul as excited, loving, alive, well, renewed, willing, steadfast, joyous. God wills to work within you. Please let Him do so. [✠]

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### Pontius' Puddle



# What's the Matter With Kids Today?

By Dan Lawson

**I**T SEEMS that everyone who reaches the advanced stages of adulthood sooner or later struggles to understand the next generation of kids. I remember when I was a teenager that I used to resent hearing adults say, "What's the matter with kids today?" Now I hear my generation saying the same thing, and I still resent it!

## A whole new set of issues

The Millennial Generation (today's junior- and senior-high students) faces issues and problems that were unheard of 20 years ago. Recently someone from Georgia wrote to Ann Landers to complain about kids of today. The person's basic attitude was that kids today are a bunch of crybabies who don't know how good they have it.

A 17-year-old wrote back to Ann Landers and said (I am paraphrasing for the sake of space): Are your parents divorced? Were you thinking about suicide when you were 12? Did you have an ulcer when you were 16? Did your best friend lose her virginity to a guy she only went out with twice?

Did you have to worry about AIDS? Did your classmates carry knives and guns or come to school drunk, stoned, or high on drugs? Did any of your friends have their brains fried from using PCP?

What percentage of your class went to a drug or alcohol rehabilitation center? Did your school have armed security guards in the hallways? Did you ever hear the sound of gunfire in your neighborhood at night?

You talk a lot about money and success. Since when does money mean happiness? The kids at school who have the most expensive cars and designer clothes are the most miserable of all. When I am your age, I won't look back and

wish things were the same. I'll just thank God that I survived.\*

Picture your congregation in your mind. What percentage of that mental image is comprised of junior- and senior-high youth? My point is this: We tend to think of the church in terms of adults, most likely adults of our own age.

**Young people today are not content to set back and let the world pass them by. They want to be part of what is happening.**

Too often we are guilty of not including the youth. We have the attitude that they are unimportant or that they are not interested in the affairs of the church. Either way, we leave them out. Perhaps if we understood them a little better we would be more willing to include them as the viable part of our church that they should be.

## What they are sensing

There are several things that young people, in general, are sensing today. For starters, they sense **abandonment**. One place where they sense this is from their parents. Adults today have their own issues to face. Many are running furiously just to keep their heads above water. The prevailing attitude is, "I need to get my own head on straight before I can help others." While that may be true, as a consequence the Millennial Generation in general feels abandoned.

Young people also sense abandonment from the church. This is by no means intentional on the

part of the church. In fact, the hope of the church is just the opposite. The truth is, however, that many of us are guilty of proudly pointing to the youth in our congregation and saying, "There is the church of tomorrow!" While we may believe this, the message our young people are hearing is, "You are not a part of what we are doing today; wait your turn."

I have actually heard youth refer to the adults in the church as "the real people." What they mean by this is that they do not feel empowered to make decisions of influence. They feel relegated to the sidelines while the "real people" run the show. Kids in the church today long to be a part of the community of believers as a whole.

## Lonely but passionate

Second, kids today are **lonely**. They long for deep relationships. They are turned off by the phoniness they perceive in society. They want someone to believe in them and to have genuine, sincere relationships with them.

Third, kids today are **passionate**! They want to belong and to be respected. Look at the programs youth of today are involved in, programs like True Love Waits. Young people today are not content to set back and let the world pass them by. They desperately want to be part of what is happening. They fear that if they don't get involved and do something now, they won't have much of a world left to live in when they get older.

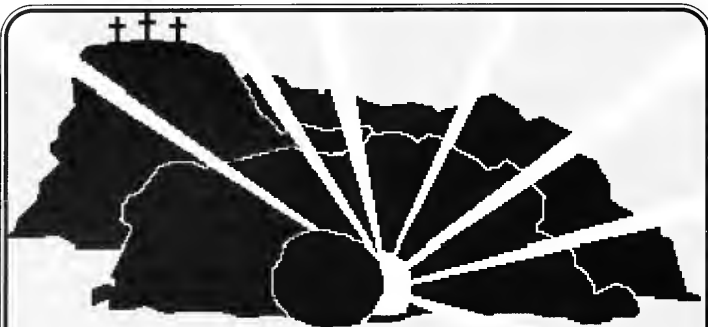
Finally, kids today are **survivors**. They long for the church to take them seriously, but they will go on without the church if they have to. Christian young people today are determined to have an active relationship with God with or without the church. The problem is, if we let them depart from the church, *we all lose!* [✠]

Next month: Young people in the church.

*Dr. Lawson is senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. This is one in a series of articles in which he applies Bible truths to our personal lives.*

\*Pastor's Update Audio Cassette, *Reaching Real Kids in Search of a Real Church*, Tape 7022, Vol. 83





## Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?

By William Lane Craig

I WAS more than mildly surprised last year, while reading an account of the Jesus Seminar in *Time* magazine, to learn—according to John Dominic Crossan, the co-chairman of the Seminar—that after the crucifixion of Jesus, His corpse was probably laid in a shallow grave, barely covered with dirt, and subsequently eaten by wild dogs; the story of Jesus' entombment and resurrection was the result of "wishful thinking."

Having carried out fairly extensive research into the historicity of Jesus' resurrection (two years as a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation at the University of Munich), I was well aware that the wide majority of New Testament critics affirm the historicity of the Gospels' assertion that Jesus' corpse was interred in the tomb of a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea. Thus it puzzled me why a prominent scholar like Crossan would set his face against the consensus of scholarship on this question.

What hitherto undetected or unappreciated evidence had he discovered, I wondered, that had escaped the notice of critical scholarship and made it probable that Jesus' body was dispatched in the way he alleged. And how did

he nullify the evidence that has led most critics to regard the Gospel accounts of Jesus' entombment as fundamentally historically reliable?

You can imagine my sense of disappointment when, upon consulting Crossan's works, I found that he had no particular evidence—much less compelling evidence—for his allegation. Rather, it was just his

hunch as to what happened to the body of Jesus.

Since he does not accept the historicity of the discovery of the empty tomb (not to speak of the resurrection), Crossan merely surmises that Jesus' corpse was laid in the graveyard reserved for executed criminals. Moreover, he does not engage the evidence that prompts most scholars to accept the historicity of Jesus' entombment. Instead, he seeks to undercut the credibility of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' burial and resurrection by means of a general analysis of the Gospel texts and traditions that is so bizarre and contrived that the overwhelming majority of New Testament critics find it wholly implausible.

It is sobering to think that it is this sort of idiosyncratic speculation that thousands of lay readers of magazines like *Time* have come to believe represents the best of contemporary New Testament scholarship concerning the historical Jesus.

### No Easter!

"There ain't gonna be no Easter this year," a high school friend once remarked to me.

"Why not?" I asked incredulously. "They found the body."

Despite his irreverent sense of

## "I Have Seen the Lord!"

By Herbert Lockyer

LAST AT THE CROSS, where Jesus died as the Lamb of God, **Mary Magdalene** was also first at the garden tomb to witness the resurrection of Jesus Christ—the most important event in world history and the pivotal truth of Christianity. What a great honor God conferred upon the faithful Mary Magdalene in permitting her to be the first witness of that resurrection!

This Mary is distinguished from all others of the same name as "the Magdalene." This identifies her with her place of birth, just as Jesus was called "the Nazarene" because of His association with Nazareth. Magdala means "tower" or "castle." In the time of Christ it was a thriving, populous town on the coast of

Galilee, about three miles from Capernaum. Dye works and primitive textile factories added to the wealth of the community. It may be that "the Magdalene" was connected with the industry of the town, for it would seem that she was a woman of some means, enabling her to serve the Lord with her substance.

Doubtless it was from the fact that Luke's first reference to Mary Magdalene follows the story of the sinful woman that the idea developed that Mary was a prostitute. But there is not an iota of genuine evidence to suggest such a bad reputation. The Bible depicts Mary as a pure, though deeply afflicted, woman before she met Jesus. There is no word whatever in the writings of the



humor, my friend displayed a measure of insight that is apparently not shared by the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar. They seem perfectly willing to maintain that although

***"Without the historical resurrection, Jesus would have been at best just another prophet who met the same unfortunate fate as others before Him."***

Jesus died and rotted away, the resurrection still has value as a symbol of Christ's "continuing presence" with us. So that Christianity can go on quite nicely as if nothing were changed. My friend's joke, on the other hand, implied that without a literal resurrection, the Christian faith is worthless.

The earliest Christians would have agreed with my friend (1 Cor. 15:14, 17, 19). Without the historical resurrection, Jesus would have been at best just another prophet who met the same unfortunate fate as others before Him. Therefore, faith in Him as Messiah, Lord, or Son of God would have been stupid. It would be no use

Christian Fathers, whose authority stands next to the Apostles, as to Mary having a foul reputation.

Mary became a disciple, and her personal ministrations, along with those of other women who had been healed, greatly aided Jesus in His missionary activities as He went from place to place preaching and teaching His message.

Jesus commissioned Mary to become the first herald of His resurrection. She had to go and announce the greatest good news ever proclaimed. "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'" (John 20:17, *NIV*). [†]

*From All the Women of the Bible* by Herbert Lockyer (Zondervan). Article provided by the publisher. Used by permission.

trying to save the situation by interpreting the resurrection as a symbol. The cold, hard facts would remain: Jesus was dead, and that's it.

I suspect that the average layperson today also has too much common sense to be impressed by theological salvage operations like that advocated by the Jesus Seminar. After all, why should I let a Christian myth about a dead man be determinative for the meaning of my life today? Why not a non-Christian myth? Why follow myths at all?

Fortunately, the Christian faith does not call for us to put our minds on the shelf, to fly in the face of com-

mon sense and history, or to make a leap of faith into the dark. The rational person, fully apprised of the evidence, can confidently believe that on that first Easter morning a divine miracle took place. [†]

*Dr. Craig (Ph.D., University of Birmingham, England; Th.D., University of Munich, Germany) is a Visiting Scholar at Emory University, Atlanta, Ga. This article is taken from the Zondervan book, Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus, Michael J. Wilkins and J. P. Moreland, General Editors. The article was provided by the publisher and is printed here by permission.*

## I Know Why We Have Easter

An Easter Devotion for Children

By Evelyn S. Wilharm

**M**Y NAME IS JUDITH. I live in Jerusalem. Let me tell you about Jesus. He is my friend. I first saw Jesus when He was teaching some people out in a grassy field. I was there with my mother. My friends and I wanted to go and talk to Jesus. But one of His helpers tried to send us away. "No," the helper said. "Jesus doesn't have time for children. He's a busy man."

Jesus heard him tell us that. "No, no," said Jesus. "Don't send the children away. Let them come to Me." Some of the littlest ones climbed onto His lap. I stood right in front of Him. Jesus put His hand on my head and smiled at me. He said, "The kingdom of God will be made up of people who are like these little children." Jesus became my friend forever.

It seemed that everybody loved Jesus then. But after a while, lots of people didn't like Him anymore. They said bad things about Him. The bad things were not true, but people believed them. And they began to say, "Crucify Him." And that is what happened. They put Him on a cross and killed Him. I cried and cried.

But that's not the end of the story. It's only the beginning. Because *Jesus didn't stay dead!* He was buried in a cave in a garden. On Sunday morning, just as

the sun was rising, some women went to visit Jesus' grave. When they got there, the grave was open, and Jesus was *not there!*

An angel was sitting on the stone that had closed the grave. The angel said, "Jesus is not here. He is risen." Mary Magdalene was one of the women who visited the grave. She is my mother's friend. She was so excited when she told us about it.

"I was standing there crying," she said, "when a man came up to me. I thought He was the gardener. I said, 'Sir, tell me where you have taken the body of Jesus.' Then the man said, 'Mary.' And I knew! I knew it was Jesus Himself! I couldn't believe it. But it was true. I saw Him with my own eyes. He is alive!"

I knew that my friend Jesus was not dead. I was happy. Jesus visited with His helpers after that. Then one day, He went up, up, up, and disappeared into the clouds. Jesus had told His helpers that He would go to live in heaven with God, and He did.

I'm glad Jesus is still alive. He is alive forever. That's why we have Easter Sunday. Happy Easter! [†]

*From Kids-Life Devotions: Stories That Apply Biblical Truth to Real Life, Chariot Victor Publishing. Used by permission.*

# Welcome to Your New Life in Christ

By Mike Sove

The following article by Pastor Mike Sove of Vineyard Community Church, a Brethren congregation in Franklin, Ohio, presents a clear picture of one important part of Brethren Impact Church Planting—*process of ministry*. Pastor Sove and his co-worker Pastor Chuck Wolfenbarger designed "Welcome to Your New Life in Christ" to help new believers grow in Christ. "Welcome" is a specific plan to help new followers of Jesus Christ grow from believers to responsible church members, from responsible members to maturing Christians, from maturing Christians to active participants in a ministry, and, for some, from participating ministers to empowering leaders.

A *process of ministry* is important for two reasons: First, it ensures that we plan for people to grow into productive Christian disciples. And second, it closes the back door of the church through which many Christians leave. A *working process of ministry* provides the nurture, training, and community environment needed for believers to enjoy a productive Christian life.

— Reilly Smith, Director of Brethren Missionary Ministries

**W**HAT'S a "New Believer" to do? That's a good question to ask. We've been asking that question for a year now at Vineyard Community Church.

We know we are to fulfill the Great Commission and make disciples, but how do we do that in a practical way? How do we take a person who has just given his or her heart and life to Jesus Christ and develop that person into a fully devoted follower of Christ—one who is equipped to be productive in the Kingdom of God. We've wrestled with those questions, and we've launched our equipping process with the following passages in mind, Matthew 28:19–20, Ephesians 4:11–13, and Colossians 1:28.

As we see it, we are called to do four things: 1. Proclaim the Gospel

(evangelize); 2. Pastor Believers (assimilate); 3. Prepare Disciples (train); 4. Plant Leaders (send). These four things are a high calling that cannot be left to chance. So the following plan is our attempt to answer this calling to make new believers into disciples of Jesus Christ.

## Welcoming statement

A brochure introducing new believers to our equipping process begins with the following words.

Welcome to your new life! By receiving Christ Jesus in your heart and being born again, God has radically transformed you. Our goal as a church is to empower you to develop to your full potential.

Here are the steps to your new life. You started "running" to first base when you were saved, but that is just the beginning. We will coach you as you become a "champion" in Christ.

You can see by our introduction that we view everyone as a potential leader with a great future ahead "in Christ." So what is our process and how does it meet the needs of these new and growing Christians?

## Step 1. Water Baptism/Welcome to the Church —

The first step after bringing a person to Christ is to get them water baptized. At this point we also attempt to connect the person to a cell group for quick assimilation. The new believer receives a *Welcome to the Church* booklet that describes who we are, what we believe, and where we are going as a church (Statement of Faith, Vision, Mission and Strategy).

**Step 2. Christianity 101** — In the cell, the new Christian begins to experience body life and is connected with another believer who will take him or her through a booklet

called *New Believer's Station*. This five-lesson booklet introduces the Christian to his or her new life in Christ and covers basics like "How to Listen to Your Lord."

**Step 3. Encounter Retreat** — Sins' strongholds and past hurts keep Christians from growing as God would have them grow. So at this retreat we want people to encounter the freeing power of Christ in every area of their lives. If they can be free from the past, they can be productive in the present and in the future.

**Step 4. Discipleship 201** — This twelve-week class is presented at our facility and teaches them how to grow in Christ and be strong in Him. Lessons such as What is Worship? How to Pray, How to Read the Word, and How to Fight Temptation are covered in this class.



The "Welcome to Your New Life" brochure of the Vineyard Church uses a baseball diamond to illustrate the steps to a new life in Christ.

**Step 5. Discovery Retreat** — This retreat is designed to help individuals understand their personality type and discover their spiritual gift(s) and calling. Our goal is to teach and interview every person who goes through this retreat so as to release each one to use his or her gifts both in the cell and in a supportive role in our celebration services.

**Step 6. Leadership 301** — This twelve-week class is taught at our church facility and is designed to equip and train individuals for cell-group leadership. It covers every

(continued in box on page 7)

## On Overview of Brethren Missions in the U.S.

By Reilly R. Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries

**B**RETHREN Missionary Ministries is actively working in the United States through Brethren Impact Church Planting, through existing U.S. mission churches, and through special missions. Some Brethren are also working in U.S. missions without district and national financial support or supervision.

The climate for reaching our nation through the ministries of Brethren churches is better now than it has been for many years. God is working among us. Here's what's happening.

### Brethren Impact Church Planting

**Grace Community Church** in Winchester, Virginia, was launched (had its first public service) on the last Sunday of September in 1998. Mike and Barbara Woods lead this new, growing church. Working with the Woods are Chris and Heather

Scott. The Scotts will eventually lead the birth of Grace Community's first daughter church. Grace Community's ministry continues to grow despite having to change locations after just a few months.

**"Our goal in Brethren Impact Church Planting is to plant congregations that are larger and healthier at birth. These churches will have a better opportunity to grow more quickly."**

**Rock Springs Community Church** was launched just one week after the launch of Grace Community. Jim and Stephanie Boyd lead this new church, which meets on the campus of National University

### Welcome

*(continued from page 6)*

thing from cell basics to relationship dynamics to the importance of personal spiritual disciplines in the lives of every leader.

**Step 7. John 3:16 Retreat** — Before a person launches a cell, we want that individual trained in how to present the gospel effectively to unbelievers. If the cell does its job in reaching out, cell members will have many opportunities to use this training in relational evangelism.

**Step 8. Champions Retreat** — When a person completes the above steps and is given vision by God to start a cell, we bring that person to a special retreat. At this retreat the person is challenged, commissioned, and anointed for cell ministry.

**Step 9. Cell Leadership** — Once a person enters cell leadership as a facilitator or apprentice,

the new leader is coached, encouraged, and trained to develop that group into a strong, reproducing, outreach-minded group. Beyond this basic equipping process, leaders are then encouraged to continue to develop their call from God through on-going classes and seminars offered in our local church training center.

We are expecting great things as we take seriously the call to "Prepare God's people for the works of service." Is this the only way? No! But it is one way to bring people to maturity, and we're seeing results even at these early stages.

By the end of this summer, all these steps will have been developed and have been used. Then Pastor Wolfenbarger and I will train interns to teach these classes and lead these retreats, so that we can go on to the next stages of development. [?]

in Vista, California. This church got off to a great start when 200 people attended the first public worship service. As expected, attendance dropped somewhat after the first two weeks, but Rock Springs continues to reach unchurched pre-Christians in the San Diego area. Meanwhile, Jim and Stephanie celebrated the birth of their second child, a son, Grant, in December.

Two other Brethren Impact congregations will be launched this month (March). **Oasis Community Church** in Chandler, Arizona, will hold its first public service on Sunday, March 7. Jim and Ann Miller will be leading this new church plant. Their leadership team includes Glenn and Sarah Black. Like Grace Community and Rock Springs, Oasis is being born "pregnant"—that is, plans include giving birth to a daughter church in the East Valley area of greater Phoenix within the first few years of its ministry.

**Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship** in Peru, Indiana, will be launched two weeks later, on March 21. Jim and Elaine Thomas are leading a service-evangelism based church in a brand new community on the former Grissom Air Force base. The Eagle's Nest team greatly benefitted from the generosity of the local redevelopment authority, even if it has been frustrating at times. Their facility is well-located, has plenty of space for great growth, and has abundant parking.

Two more Brethren Impact congregations are scheduled for launch in the fall. **Living Waters Community Church** in Mansfield, Ohio, was originally to begin in March, but Pastor Ron Miller and the steering committee determined that waiting until late September would increase the probability for a successful start. Ron and Sandy Miller are planting this new church in the building that formerly housed Walcrest Brethren Church. The church building and parsonage have been completely remodeled. The Millers are building an exciting team of ministry-oriented people from among the Brethren, Ashland Theological Seminary, and the surrounding community.

*(continued on next page)*

**Rocky Mountain Community Church** in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, will be launched about the same time as Living Waters. Jeff and Zenita Kaplan are starting this new Brethren church in the fastest-growing suburb of Denver in the fastest-growing county in the United States. Jeff and Zenita came to The Brethren Church from another denomination through our relationship with Dynamic Church Planting International. Jeff is actively building a core team and recently added a music and worship minister.

### Existing Mission Churches

Some Brethren Home Mission churches that were planted before we initiated the Brethren Impact movement continue to work towards self-support and towards reproducing themselves.

Pastors Mike Sove and Chuck Wolfbarger lead the **Vineyard Community Church** in Franklin, Ohio (see previous article). Vineyard Community Church is the result of a merger of the former Northview Brethren Life Church and the Franklin Vineyard Church. From its first Sunday the new church, unlike most mergers, has been larger than the combined total of the two separate churches. The congregation is growing to the point that it needs to remodel its building to add classrooms. The church also sends short-term missions teams to Mexico and offers Bible institute training.

Daniel and Kathy Rosales lead **Iglesia de los Hermanos** in Sarasota, Florida. Daniel continues to evangelize Spanish-speaking people among a very transient population in central Florida. In addition to his pastoral work, Daniel is a well-known radio speaker and evangelist throughout Latin America. He is also mentoring another couple, Italo and Rebecca Abuid, in ministry. The Abuids are helping the Rosales start Bible studies and possibly a new Spanish-speaking church in Brandon, Florida. Some day the Abuids will probably serve The Brethren Church in international missions.

Jerry and Linda Barr lead the **Gateway Brethren Fellowship** in Hagerstown, Maryland. Jerry is a

bi-vocational pastor. He and Linda concentrate their ministry efforts within the apartment complex in which they live, but the outreach includes the whole community.

### Special ministries

United States missions also includes three special ministries. The Brethren Church works in a supportive, though limited, role with Riverside Christian School in Lost Creek, Kentucky. This has the distinction of being our oldest Brethren Mission work. Doran and Nancy Hostetler head the school, with capable assistance from Randy and Karen Best and a dedicated staff. Several dozen students received Christ as their Lord and Savior through the ministry of Riverside during the 1997-98 school year.

The Brethren Church has also maintained a long-term supportive role in the **ministry to Hispanics** of Juan Carlos and María Miranda. Juan Carlos served the Brethren in several capacities over most of three decades in Latin American missions. Maria produces a radio program in Spanish, *Para ti Mujer*, which is

heard around the world, but especially in North and South America. Currently, the Brethren are part of a broader team of people who support the Miranda's work through the Hispanic Education Association.

Eugene and Georgia Bell conduct an **Inner-City Ministry** in Indianapolis, Indiana (see also page 12). Gene leads Bible studies, care groups of various kinds, children's ministries, and a food and clothing pantry. He operates the ministry under the supervision of the Indiana District Mission Ministry and the Muncie First Brethren Church. Brethren Missionary Ministries provides help with accounting, promotion, and encouragement.

### A pioneer effort

Finally, Pat and Cathy Velanzon are leaders of a new Brethren church in Cross Keys, Virginia. The **Cross Keys Worship Center** was launched in 1998. Pastor Pat is leading this new church as a pioneering church planter. The new church has initiated some creative outreaches into the community. The group is entirely self-supporting. [✚]

## Brethren Impact Church Planting

### A new way to start Brethren churches

**O**UR GOAL in Brethren Impact Church Planting is to plant congregations that are larger and healthier at birth. These churches will have a better opportunity to grow more quickly.

Starting a new church is like birthing a baby. Churches and babies require a full gestation period in order to develop properly. Premies have a rough time.

### Five Phases of Developing Brethren Impact Churches

1. Building a solid foundation: prayer, vision, demographics, strategy, relationships, process of ministry, core development, leadership, and outreach.

2. Reaching out for people: letting God direct the outreach, using marketing principles, exercising a variety of outreach op-

tions, developing an outreach plan, and expanding a network of small groups.

3. Preparing for a dynamic birth celebration: recruiting and training leaders, aiming for a critical mass of 40-60 trained workers, holding practice celebrations, and executing the outreach plan.

4. Helping the crowd become a church: celebrating the first public worship service, initiating follow-up, continuing evangelism, assimilating new peoples, expanding outreach, and beginning to be involved in missions.

5. Developing the new church: growing from strength to strength, choosing a church board (phasing in a church board), starting new ministries to meet needs, starting another church, mentoring a new church planter, and purchasing property in a timely way. [✚]

# Waiting When Heaven is Silent

By Jewell Johnson

**N**O ONE LIKES TO WAIT. We suffer through supermarket lines. Waiting rooms bore us. We are people on the move, living in the now. We don't like to stand still.

Yet slow times and periods of frustration come to all of us. A sickness lingers, a negative circumstance does not change. The time between prayer and answer stretches on and on.

Joseph had such an experience (Gen. 39–41). While in prison, he interpreted the dreams of two fellow inmates, Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker. He told the butler he would be freed, and the baker that he would be hanged. Events turned out just as he said they would.

"Please remember me when you see Pharaoh," Joseph said to the butler as he was about to go free. But the butler forgot. So Joseph waited. For two full years he remained in jail.

## What did Joseph do?

What did Joseph do while waiting? Did he wallow in self-pity? Did he seethe with bitterness at Poti-

phar's wife? "She's the reason I'm here!" he could have thought.

Did hatred for his brothers fill his waking moments? Or as he lay on his cot at night, did he shake his fist and blame God?

Joseph took a different route, bypassing grudges, bitterness, and frustration. After two years he could stand before Pharaoh and calmly say, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace" (Gen. 41:16, *KJV*). Pharaoh marveled that Joseph was "a man in whom the spirit of God is" (41:38).

## What can we do?

How do we handle our own times of waiting? What can we do when heaven seems silent and prayers go unanswered?

*Let go.* "Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him," the Psalmist says (Ps. 37:5, *NIV*). Commit means to "consign to another." This does not mean that we stop praying about a situation, but it does mean we quit telling God what to do. Instead we say, "Work this out in your

chairman Richard M. DeVos. "It's been an amazing journey, and a testimony of what God can do through the willing hands of a small group of men and women whose efforts are dedicated to Him."

Launched in 1995, Gospelcom had more than 414 million hits in 1998 from Internet users in 193 countries and territories around the world. And what began in 1995 with 10 founding groups has now grown into an online alliance of 157 separate but unified ministries.

Not content to rest on their accomplishments, GCI's leaders agree that this ministry must be ready to utilize new technologies in the next millennium. "With God's help," declares Billy Zeoli, GCI's president, "Gospel Communications will continue as a cutting-edge ministry in this constantly changing world." [†]

own way, Lord, in your own time."

*Rely on the Bible, the church, and Christian friends.* Sometimes people withdraw from Christian fellowship when times get difficult. A friend stopped attending church when her teenage children became rebellious. That was two years ago. She has not returned, and the conduct of her children is unchanged.

Another mother took the opposite approach. She continued to participate in her church during a family crisis. Each time she attended, she asked the group to pray for her sons. She received spiritual and emotional support, and eventually her children turned to God.

Consistent Bible study, faithful church attendance, and Christian friendships can help to carry us through times of waiting and discouragement.

*Keep busy.* Joseph did. Soon after Joseph's confinement began, the warden committed to him the responsibility for all the prison's inmates. Joseph faithfully performed menial tasks, doing what he could where he was.

Others, too, have made important contributions during times of waiting. While Paul waited in Roman chains, he wrote letters to Christians. John Bunyan authored *Pilgrim's Progress* in a dreary prison cell. Other believers have used times of waiting to memorize Scripture verses and hymns.

*Get involved in the lives of others.* Difficult situations tend to blind us to the needs around us. We isolate ourselves. Joseph did not allow his own worries to keep him from recognizing the needs of others. He became involved in their lives.

## How will it end?

Joseph's waiting time eventually ended. After two years, the butler's memory was jogged. Joseph was released and given a position of honor.

Not every period of waiting ends exactly the way we think it should. Yet God is faithful. David says, "I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry" (Ps. 40:1, *NIV*). Our waiting is not in vain. Release is on the way. [†]

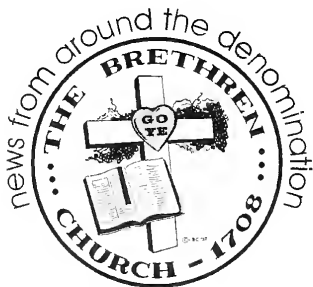
*Mrs. Johnson is a free-lance writer who lives in Springfield, Missouri.*

## Check out this web site

**G**OSPEL FILMS, Inc., is a Christian ministry that has learned to change with the times. It began 50 years ago as a fledgling ministry dedicated to capturing the drama of the Christian story on film. Today it sponsors the largest and most popular *Christian* web site on the Internet—an outreach called Gospelcom ([www.gospelcom.net](http://www.gospelcom.net)).

Last year Gospel Films, Inc., even outgrew its original name. It is now called Gospel Communications International, Inc. (GCI), a name that more accurately reflects the broad scope of its work. Nevertheless, it has held firmly to its mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"We've gone from being a pioneer in film evangelism to leading the way in high-tech, worldwide ministry via the web," says GCI's board



## In Memory

**Enid W. Schrader**, 51, a tentmaker in the STAKE church-planting effort in the Florida District, died unexpectedly in her home in St. Cloud, Fla., on February 2.

Enid was born August 22, 1947, in New Lebanon, Ohio, where she became a member of The Brethren Church in New Lebanon at an early age. She later attended the Hillcrest Brethren Church in Dayton, Ohio.

She served for two years at the House of Hope, a school for the blind in Bethlehem, Israel, where she cared for children. In 1994 she became one of nine tentmakers who began STAKE in the Orlando/Kissimmee area of Florida. By 1998 only Enid and Linda Yoder remained as tentmakers, and they decided to close the work at the end of the year. (See "STAKE tentmakers announce close of church-planting effort in central Florida" on pages 10 & 11 of last month's issue.) Enid had hoped to move to another area where she could continue to work in a missions/tentmaking effort.

Enid was a sweet-spirited woman with a heart for the Lord and a love for children. She lived to bring others to Christ. A memorial service for her was held at The Brethren Church in New Lebanon, with Pastor Bill Walk officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to The Brethren Church of New Lebanon for future missionary endeavors. [†]



## Hammond Ave. Brethren help distribute videos of "Jesus" film to every home in Waterloo, Iowa

**Waterloo, Iowa** — On November 7, 1998, 24 people from the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church in Waterloo joined more than 2,000 people from 50 local congregations in Waterloo and Cedar Falls in distributing video copies of the "Jesus" film to every household in these two neighboring cities.

This historic event was the culmination of a year of lay-motivated praying, planning, and promoting in the Christian community. It was also the first time a metropolitan area in Iowa had attempted such an undertaking.

The "Jesus" film, produced by Campus Crusade, is a dramatization of the life of Jesus based on the Gospel of Luke. The sound track to the film has been dubbed in hundreds of languages, and the film has been shown around the world. It has been used by God to bring thousands of people to faith in Jesus Christ.

Those who distributed the videos met at a local high school on Saturday, November 7, for a time of training, a pep rally, and to pick up copies of the videos. A total of 40,000 videos had been purchased (at \$5 each) by churches and individuals in the Waterloo area. The 2,000 people then went out two-by-two to every street in Waterloo and Cedar Falls, distributing the videos to every household that would receive one. If they found no one at home, they put

a copy of the video on the door knob.

The whole project was undergirded with prayer. Christians in the area had been encouraged to begin praying for the success of the project weeks before the videos were distributed. They prayed for good weather, protection for the workers, and that people would receive the videos, watch them, and open their hearts to Jesus. Then on Saturday, October 31, one week before the distribution day, hundreds of Christians from the area (including eight from the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church) walked the streets of Waterloo and Cedar Falls praying for each household.

"I am not sure what the result [of this project] will be," said Rev. Ronald L. Waters, pastor of the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church, "but I know God's Word will not return unto Him void. One of the great results of the project was that many 'brands' of Christians—Roman Catholic, African-American, liberals, and evangelicals—worked together. This was the first time in history in this area that such a diverse group of believers presented a unified ministry. We prayed, worshiped, gave, and worked together so that people who never walk through a church door would be introduced to Jesus Christ. It was a good, non-threatening experience of evangelism for our people."

—reported by Pastor Ronald L. Waters

## Situation "alarming" in S. Sudan

**Wheaton, Ill.** — World Relief President Clive Calver found the situation in southern Sudan "alarming" in his recent visit to that area.

It is not as bad as it was when he made his first visit there eight months ago, but it has the potential to escalate to that point within the next few months. In some areas, it could surpass the suffering seen last year. "Much hinges on the crop recently harvested, and most estimates are that it is not nearly adequate," Calver reports.

The World Food Program estimates that 2.4 million people in southern Sudan continue to need emergency food aid in order to survive. World Relief is providing food daily to almost 2,000 children and medicines to serve 180,000 people.

In addition, World Relief is working with church groups in three regions of southern Sudan to help build back into the communities the infrastructures (schools, clinics, local governments) that have been destroyed by war. These are necessary in order for people to survive on their own. [†]

## Persecution of Christians in India prompts Kumars to appeal for prayers of U.S. Brethren

**Rajahmundry, India** — Brethren Missionaries Dr. K. Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar have sent an urgent appeal requesting that Brethren across the United States “pray and plead for the safety of Christians, pastors, and missionaries in India and for the extension of [our] Lord’s kingdom on earth.”

The reason for their appeal is an outbreak of persecution that has occurred in India in recent weeks. In January, news media around the world reported the death of an Aus-

tralian missionary and his two sons, who were burnt alive while sleeping in a station wagon. Hindu fanatics poured gasoline over the vehicle and set it aflame.

According to the Kumars, this was just one incident in a movement of persecution of Christians that is spreading across India. It began in Bihar State and, according to Dr. Kumar, has been rapidly moving into all the states. Using brutal methods of burning and killing, Hindu religious fanatics are trying



to destroy the roots of Christianity throughout India. It is reported that they are preparing a hit list of important Christian leaders whom they will seek to kill.

The burning of the missionary and his two sons occurred in Orissa State, which is next to Andhra Pradesh, the state where the Kumars live and in which the Brethren Mission is located. It has also been reported that in some places in Andhra state, pastors have been sent threatening letters in an effort to stop baptisms.

In calling on Brethren in the U.S. to pray, the Kumars are asking American Brethren to do what Brethren in India are already doing. Prasanth and Nirmala write, “We would like to inform you that our Lord has been strengthening us through a powerful weapon which we have been practicing in our Brethren Church in India for a very long time. That is **prayer**. For the last few years we have been having an ‘around the clock’ prayer program in our Brethren Church, where pastors and people pray all the time for the needs of the people.”

The Kumars go on to say, “Now our Brethren are comforted and consoled in all their persecution by praying at the Lord’s feet to uphold them at the times of their trials and tribulations.” And they add, “We request all the Brethren across the country to pray for us.” [✠]

## Secretary of State Madeleine Albright honors World Relief’s Miami area director Tom Willey

**Miami, Fla.** — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met with Tom Willey, World Relief’s Miami area director, on February 5 to personally thank him for his leadership role in aiding victims of Hurricane Mitch in Central America.

With the aid of hundreds of volunteers and church congregations, Willey and his World Relief staff channeled 1.7 million pounds of relief goods from Miami to Hurricane Mitch victims in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. The donated supplies were distributed by World Relief and its church partners in each country.

World Relief continues to provide relief supplies to these countries devastated by Hurricane Mitch. What the hurricane destroyed in a week will take years to rebuild, and it will take a substantial investment of donations, prayer, and long-term friendship. To help provide these, World Relief has launched what it is calling the *Projimos* Campaign (*pro-jimo*—a friend, neighbor, or person nearby). This campaign renews World Relief’s commitment to its Central American friends as they face the incredible challenge of rebuilding their lives.

The *Projimos* Campaign is dedicated to raising critical funds to continue the work that World Relief began years ago in these countries. The goal is to raise \$2 million over two years. These funds will help

World Relief accomplish three goals:

1. Provide much-needed emergency relief and aid (food, shelter, medicine) for those hit hardest by Hurricane Mitch.

2. Continue efforts to strengthen World Relief’s long-term economic development strategies in existing successful programs, such as housing reconstruction, agricultural assistance, and LifeLoans to restart income-producing businesses.

3. Fulfill World Relief’s ultimate vision of demonstrating God’s love in a tangible way to its Central American friends.

### Colombia

Using the donation processing system already in place, World Relief in Miami was also able to rush 20,000 pounds of relief supplies to earthquake victims in Colombia, South America, immediately after the February 1 earthquake occurred there. That shipment of emergency supplies was the beginning of a larger response now being provided by World Relief.

Donations to support the relief work either in Colombia or in countries devastated by Hurricane Mitch may be sent to “Brethren Missionary Ministries” at The Brethren Church National Office, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. Please write “World Relief—Colombia” or “World Relief—Hurricane Mitch” on the memo line of the check. [✠]

*People aren’t thinking anymore. For thinking we have substituted entertainment. The substitution has been so effective that many of us believe that entertainment actually makes us think. Television bombards us with images that allow no time for assimilation. It actually keeps us from thinking.*

— James Montgomery Boice





## Park Street member named Ashland's volunteer of year

**Ashland, Ohio** — Margaret Hess, a member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, was recently named Volunteer of the Year by the United Way of Ashland County.

Mrs. Hess worked with the United Way Campaign this year, as she has the past several years, helping the organization raise pledges. In recognition of her service and her selection as Volunteer of the Year, she received a "throw" with a United Way emblem on it.



Mrs. Hess is involved in a variety of other Ashland organizations. She serves on the Ashland City Schools Academic Foundation, which raises funds for projects of the city schools, and is a member of the Academic Boosters at Ashland High School. She is also a very active member of Park Street Brethren Church, where she helps her husband Jim, who is moderator of the congregation, with the youth Sunday school class.

Mrs. Hess also seeks to serve in ways that will benefit her sons and their classmates. Her older son, Tim, a senior at Ashland High School (and a member of the national Brethren Youth In Christ Steering Committee) sings in the a cappella choir, for which Mrs. Hess volunteers her services. Her younger son, Mark, is an eighth-grader at Ashland Middle School, where Mrs. Hess is one of two parent representatives serving on the Venture Capital Committee.

Mrs. Hess says that she likes to volunteer because most volunteer terms are short and offer a flexible schedule, allowing her to experience many different activities and to see results. She said it also gives her an opportunity to be with friends. [✚]

## Inner-City Ministry using a variety of means to reach children of Indianapolis for Christ

**Indianapolis, Ind.** — A Saturday afternoon Kids Klub and an after-school ministry are two ways the Inner-City Ministry, operated by Eugene and Georgia Bell, is seeking to reach children in Indianapolis.



Eugene and Georgia Bell

The Kids Klub is aimed at children who are of pre-school age to sixth-grade level. The children are divided by age group and take part in age-appropriate activities that focus on their spiritual, social, academic, and cultural development. Audio-visual materials, arts and crafts, recreational activities, and field trips are used with the children. Dr. Bell also takes some of the children with him occasionally when he visits Brethren churches, in order to introduce them to the denomination.

The after-school ministry is a new venture of the Inner-City Ministry. Partnering with other individuals in two different communities, the Bells provide after-school educational tutoring and related activities for inner-city children. In addition to helping the children, Dr. Bell sees this ministry as a way to build bridges to eventually reach some of the parents of these children.

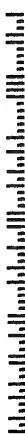
Recently, thanks to help from some Brethren congregations, the Inner-City Ministry was able to take 14 children for an overnight stay at the Brethren Retreat Center in Shipshewana, Ind. This was a new kind of experience for most of these

inner-city children. They said they really had a good time, and several of the children have expressed an interest in attending summer camp.

Providing food, clothing, and emergency financial assistance to needy families; giving spiritual counseling; and referring families to appropriate community agencies are some of the other activities of the Inner-City Ministry. In addition, Dr. Bell conducts home Bible studies with several families, and twice a month he leads a group Bible study for a pastor friend who has a small congregation in the community.

A ministry of this kind has many needs: Bibles, educational materials, clothing, food, financial assistance, and prayer. For more information on how you can help, contact Dr. Eugene Bell by phone at 317-353-9927 or by letter at 436 N. Riley Ave., Indianapolis IN 46201. [✚]

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*No man has a good  
enough memory to be a  
successful liar.*

— Abraham Lincoln



# The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 121, No. 4

A newsletter for Brethren people

April 1999

## What can WE do about the crisis in Kosovo?

"NATO forces bomb Yugoslavia." "Serbs accused of genocide." "Air assault on Kosovo broadened." These are a few of the headlines that have greeted us in recent weeks.

The headlines are alarming enough, but when we read the stories that go with them, we are even more dismayed. Ethnic cleansing and religious wars have taken the lives of thousands. Tens of thousands in Kosovo have been forced to leave their country as refugees.

And it's all so confusing. Who exactly are these people? Why can't they get along? What are the issues? Who is in the right and who is in the wrong? Is there any hope for peace? We tend to throw up our hands in despair and move on to other things. After all, "What can I do about it anyway?"

### We can pray

But there is something you and I can do about it. First of all, we can pray—and I certainly don't mean for this to sound trite. There is certainly more than physical warfare going on in that region of the world; there is spiritual warfare as well. We need to enlist in God's army and join the battle on our knees.

As we pray, we will be "fighting" alongside Christians in that country who are also engaged in prayer. Yes, there are concerned, praying Christians there. A recent news release from World Relief reported that prior to the beginning of NATO air strikes, Serbian evangelical Christians in Belgrade, the capital, were praying around the clock and fasting every Tuesday on behalf of their country. Their prayers were that the desire for political power be re-

placed by a passion for peace, justice, and the preservation of God's miraculous creation—human life. I think we could join them in that prayer!

Along with this, Dr. Clive Calver, president of World Relief, has suggested three specific subjects for prayer: (1) for the 450,000 refugees displaced from Kosovo since fighting began last year; (2) for evangelical churches in Kosovo, which are trying to remain strong in the midst of crisis; and (3) for relief efforts to elderly Bosnian and Croatian refugees in Serbia, which have been suspended because of the bombings.

But Christians in Yugoslavia are not just praying. They are putting hands and feet to their prayers. In February and March, churches in Belgrade delivered 17 tons of food and 7.5 tons of children's clothing, vitamins, and 900 bed sheets to Kosovo war victims. They continued to deliver aid even after other aid groups working in the region evacuated their staff. "Serbian evangelicals in Yugoslavia are pressing ahead with their work and prayers for peace at great risk to themselves," says Arne Bergstrom, World Relief's Vice President of International Ministries, "and they need our prayers of support."

### More than prayers

But they need more than our prayer support. They also need our assistance. That brings me to the second thing we can do about the crisis in Kosovo: We can help these Christians with their relief efforts by our offerings to World Relief.

Christians in Yugoslavia don't have the means to provide all the help that is needed. They must look



to outside agencies for assistance. World Relief is one of those agencies. In line with its policy of "churches helping churches meet human needs", World Relief has been partnering in Yugoslavia with Bread of Life, the outreach arm of the Serbian evangelical churches.

But in order to maintain that partnership, World Relief must receive support from churches (and individuals in those churches) in the United States—churches like yours and mine and individuals like you and me.

### Making a difference

The prayers and the relief efforts of Christians in Belgrade are making a difference. Usually evangelical Christians in Yugoslavia are considered to be cult members and are viewed with scorn. But when bombs began to fall around Belgrade, a local evangelical relief worker found her apartment full of neighbors. They came seeking words of comfort and hope from her New Testament.

We can be part of this by our prayers and by our gifts to World Relief. Yes, we *can* do something about the crisis in Kosovo. [3]

— Richard Winfield, Editor

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# From Jesus, With Love

By Linda Barr

**W**HAT A SPECIAL VALENTINE from Jesus 120 youth and their advisors received February 12-14 at the National Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) Rally! This annual event was held this year at the Holidome in Beaver Falls, Pa. The theme of the rally, taken from 1 Peter 1:9-12, was "Shout it Out!"

Holding anything in Pennsylvania in February is a little scary, and this year was no different. The weather forecast for the weekend was not very promising. But with much prayer by many people, everyone arrived safely and on time.

## A sense of expectancy

Following some icebreakers led by the Three Seasons BYIC, the tone for the weekend was set by an awe-inspiring Concert of Prayer directed by Pastors Terry Gindlesperger and T.J. McLaughlin. The devil tried to get his foot in the door, with secular music blaring from the hotel bar. But the prayers of God's people rose above all the din. We left that evening with a sense of expectancy of what God was going to accomplish during the remainder of our time together.

After a hearty breakfast Saturday morning, we spent time in praise and worship and then broke into groups for our seminars. The junior high seminar leader was Jaime Gillespie, and the senior high/post high leader was Dr. Lee Solomon.

We had three intense sessions during the day and really learned a lot! Both leaders were very creative in presenting their seminars, and both did an excellent job in getting their points across. We left the seminars excited about shouting out the good news of Jesus. To better prepare us for this task, we spent some time praying in small groups.

Following an afternoon spent enjoying the pool, hot tub, sauna, mini-golf, ping pong, arcade games, and just visiting with friends, we enjoyed a fabulous buffet dinner. After the meal, Richard Billman of Ashland University told us what the university has to offer and also gave us some good advice about financial aid for college. Then Jaime Gillespie, the newly-appointed National Youth Leader, told about Summer Ministry opportunities.

After a short break, we returned for an evening of awesome dramas by the HOPE Drama Team of Ashland University. This group is led by Rachel Pennington, Spokesperson for the National BYIC Steering Committee. Some of the people at the bar must have heard us "shouting it out," because they came in to watch one of the performances! The dramas challenged us in a most meaningful way to remember what Jesus has done for us and what it means to be a Christian. Pastor T.J. McLaughlin followed with his own challenge to us to "shout it out."

## An unplanned blessing

The planned part of the evening was over—at least what we had planned. But Jesus was not finished blessing us. A small group gathered on the third floor and began singing praise songs. The lifeguard asked us to come down by the pool and sing. She said she knew all the songs we were singing, for she lifeguards at a Baptist camp in the summer.

By this time our numbers had grown. As we began to "shout it

out," people came out on their balconies to listen. Some of them were the people from the bar who had dropped in at the dramas. They heard the Brethren Youth proclaim the awesomeness of God, their desire to know and serve Him, and the message of the Gospel through a variety of praise choruses and scriptural songs. Even the managers came out to listen! What a beautiful time of praise, thanksgiving, and testimony! The Lord even opened the door for some of us to talk with other guests about Him. What a fitting close to a tremendous day!

## A special Sunday

The Lord had something special in store for us on Sunday as well. The members of the National BYIC Steering Committee were in charge of the morning worship service. They led us in several praise songs, ending with "Shine, Jesus, Shine." This song was picked because it is Jaime Gillespie's favorite. When we finished singing it, Tony Price of the National Youth Ministry Advisory Group led us in a laying on of hands ceremony for Jaime to commission her for the new ministry to which God has called her. All present took part in this service.

Aaron Hollewell, a member of the Steering Committee and our morning speaker, read from James 5 and then asked for anointing for healing of physical ailments of unknown origin that he has been suffering. Rev. David Cooksey, Aaron's former pastor, anointed Aaron, asking those who were especially close to Aaron to lay hands on him and pray. Then, with the aid of a mind-boggling scientific experiment, Aaron challenged us to put God and His will first in our lives and to let everything else fall into its proper place. At the conclusion of his message, we closed our weekend with a hearty rendition of "Shout to the Lord!"

I believe all of us who attended the rally left with hearts filled with joy and love—our special valentine from Jesus! [✝]

*Mrs. Barr of the Gateway Brethren Church, Hagerstown, Md., is BYIC Steering Committee and Council Assistant and a member of the Youth Ministry Advisory Group.*

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# Today's Teens: Do They Fit in Our Churches?

By Dan Lawson

IN MARK 10:13-16 we read an account of people bringing their children to Jesus for His blessing. As you may recall, the disciples tried to stop the children from coming to Jesus. When Jesus realized this, Mark says that He was **indignant**. He told the disciples, "Let the little children come to me . . . for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (v. 14, *NIV*).

When we reflect on this passage, our immediate thought should be, "What are we doing to bring our children to Jesus?" And I'm not thinking of just the little children about whom Mark's Gospel seems to speak. I'm also including today's teens, the group I referred to in last month's article as the Millennial Generation.

We sometimes tend to overlook teen-agers. They seem to speak their own language and live in their own world, and we just don't understand them. In the church we sometimes cater to the needs of little children and adults, while unintentionally ignoring the teen-agers. Then we wonder why they feel abandoned by the church (*see last month's article*) and why they stop attending church services as soon as they leave for college.

## A passion to be involved

As I noted last month, Millennial Teens are passionate. They desperately want to be part of what is happening around them. They are not content to sit back and wait their turn. They see how the environment is being ruined by pollution. They see the economy going down hill. And they recognize the dangers of immoral behavior and sexual promiscuity. Their attitude is, "If I don't get involved now, there may be nothing of value left when I'm an adult." So they get passion-

ately involved in groups like True Love Waits and in other organizations in which they can take a stand for what they believe in. As a church, we need to make a place for them to be passionate about Jesus.

## A longing to feel connected

Teens today long to be connected. They, like the generations before them, find their identity in relationships. "Skaters" hang out with "Skaters"; "Preps" hang out with "Preps"; and so on. Teens want to find someplace where they fit in. As a church, we need to give them such a place. We need to help them get connected to Jesus and to find their true identity in Him and in His body, the church.

**"As a church, we must find creative ways to demonstrate to our young people just how much they matter to us and to God."**

Teens are also authentic. This is nothing new. Kids have always been authentic. Serve any child liver and onions and he will probably find some way to honestly let you know what he thinks about liver and onions. Kids say what they think. Watch one episode of Bill Cosby's program, "Kids Say the Darndest Things," and you'll see what I mean. Millennial Teens are no different. They may be older, but they have not lost that quality of honesty.

Most adults have learned to sidestep issues, put up false fronts, and flat out lie about their feelings. We should treasure the honesty and authenticity of the Millennial Generation. When we ask them what

they think about church, we should be prepared for an honest answer, and we shouldn't punish them for saying what they really believe.

We live in a harsh, frightening world, and it seems to get more wicked all the time. Today's youth are being forced to grow up all too quickly, and they can find this very frightening. When a small child is frightened, her first instinct is to climb up on her mother's lap to feel safe and secure. Millennial Teens are not likely to climb up on their parents' laps, but the desire for safety is still there. The church needs to provide a safe haven for them where they can feel the security of a genuine, authentic relationship with God.

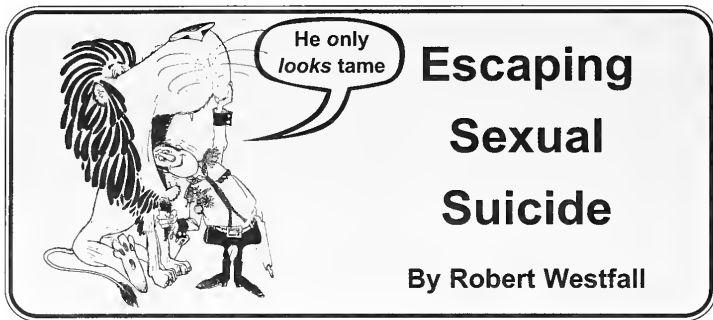
## A desire to matter

Whenever I am working on my car or doing something in my shop, my eight-year-old son comes to see what I am doing. His response is never, "Gee, Dad, I see that you are doing something of great significance, and I wonder if it would be appropriate for me to stand here and observe your activity?" Instead he says, "Dad, can I help?" He wants to pick up the tools, turn the bolts, and get grease on his hands too.

This attitude of wanting to help is very similar to the passionate involvement I mentioned earlier. Millennial Teens, like everyone else, want to feel significant. They want to know that they are important to you and in the world around them. As a church we must find creative ways to demonstrate to our young people just how much they matter to us and to God. Seeking their opinions about the mission of the church and including them in the ministries of the church can go a long way in accomplishing this objective. [✠]

*Next month: Specific ways the church can include Millennial Teens in the Body of Christ.*

*Dr. Lawson is senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. This is one in a series of articles in which he applies Bible truths to our personal lives.*



**B**YRON PAULUS of Life Action Ministries tells of the following experience, which he had while on a recent commuter airline flight to Knoxville, Tennessee:

Shortly after I got on the plane, the copilot's voice came over the intercom with an announcement that jolted me, "When the captain boards the aircraft, please applaud. He just learned that his fiancée is pregnant with twins!"

I could hardly believe my ears! As the dozen or so other passengers broke out into cheers and applause, I felt a sickening thud in my stomach. "Has it come to this," I wondered, "that we would be encouraged to applaud an act of fornication? Has our society really drifted this far from her spiritual and moral moorings?"

Something that would have been a shame to mention a generation ago is now flaunted and cheered. I found myself grieving over a society that is practicing and promoting casual sex.\*

What the world applauds should be grieved, just as the death of a loved one is grieved. It should be grieved, because sexual immorality is suicidal.

God's will for our lives is sexual purity. Paul makes this clear in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, where he declares: "It is God's will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; . . .""\*\*

We walk down the path of destruc-

tion when we violate God's will and practice sexual immorality. King Solomon made it explicitly clear in Proverbs 5:1-23 and 6:20-7:27 that sexual immorality leads to destruction.

Sexual immorality of any kind is extremely dangerous. It destroys family life. It erodes a person's ability to love. It degrades human beings and turns them into objects. It can lead to disease. It can result in unwanted children. And ultimately, it destroys us.

During the 13th century, many strange devices were created to torture and kill people. Perhaps the most deceptive was a life-size statue of a beautiful woman in an attractive setting. Her arms were outstretched as if to offer a loving embrace.

When the cruel men in charge of this evil invention wished to see an enemy die a horrible death, they would tell him he was among a select few who were privileged to view the carved figure. Often the superstitious victim would be so fascinated by the statue that he would draw closer and closer to inspect its beauty. But as he stood directly in front of it, the arms would suddenly move forward and clutch him, while a hundred knives simultaneously emerged to pierce his body.

## Two critical truths

We need to recognize two critical truths as we fight to be sexually pure. First, everyone is vulnerable to temptation. Paul declares, "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (1 Cor. 10:12; see also, Rom. 7:14-24). If we were transparent with each other, we would admit how vulnerable we are to saying yes to temptation. No one is immune. Even though we, as

believers in Jesus Christ, have died to sin, we still wrestle with the old sin nature. For those who think they are too strong to commit sexual sin—**BEWARE!**

Any lion trainer will tell you that there is no such thing as a tame lion. A lion may be on his good behavior today, and tomorrow he may be a whirlwind of ferocity. The lion may eat out of your hand, or permit you to put your head into his mouth today, but tomorrow, if a sudden fury arises within his wild heart, he may tear you limb from limb. Anyone entering the cage does so at great risk. The thirst for blood is there, and sometimes it flares up.

## Victory is possible

Second, everyone can have victory over temptation. After emphasizing our vulnerability to sin, Paul goes on to state, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Cor. 10:13; see also 2 Cor. 10:4).

After kicking out the props of our false security, Paul points toward the One on whom we can rely. The temptations that seize us are like those that people have always faced. They can be met and endured by depending on God, who is faithful and will make a way for us to endure the temptation and not sin.

We must realize how vulnerable we are, and always be on the alert. Jesus declared, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak" (Matt. 26:41).

If we don't gain the victory, then we will commit sexual suicide. "But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself" (Prov. 6:32).

Take hope, Brethren! Every one of us can have victory over sexual immorality, in spite of our vulnerability to it. How can we be on the alert? What can we do when temptation strikes? Next month we will look at some practical steps to gaining victory over sexual temptation. [?]

*Rev. Westfall is pastor of the First Brethren Church in Pleasant Hill, Ohio.*

\**Revival Report*, Nov 1993, Page 1.

\*\*All quotations from the Bible are from the *New International Version*.

## A Unique Ministry of Caring for the Church and Community

*In December 1998, First Brethren Church of South Bend, Ind., began a ministry that may be unique in The Brethren Church—the ministry of a Congregational Nurse. In the following article, Rev. Larry Baker, pastor of First Brethren in South Bend, explains the purpose of this ministry and tells how it is working.*

**“WHAT’S** a Congregational Nurse? I’ve never heard of this before.” “Is this something new?” “What will a Congregational Nurse do?” “What’s it going to cost us?” These are some of the questions that people at First Brethren Church in South Bend asked last summer when they learned about a unique opportunity for the congregation to partner with Memorial Hospital of South Bend to provide a Congregational Nurse for the church.

Dr. Bill Wassner, pastor of First Christian Church in South Bend, a church that has had a Congregational Nurse for more than three years, and Suzanne Bush, a registered nurse (R.N.) who is a member of First Brethren, explained to our church that a Congregational Nurse is a specially-trained Registered Nurse who partners with an existing pastoral care team to provide 20 hours of physical and spiritual ministry per week to the congregation and to the community of which the church is a part. The work of the Congregational Nurse is guided by the church’s Wellness Committee.

### A good deal!

In order to implement this program, Memorial Hospital pays 100 percent of the Congregational Nurse’s salary and travel expenses the first year, 80 percent the second year, 60 percent the third year, and so on. This gives a congregation time to learn the value of a Congregational Nurse before the position becomes a major budget item. It is also Memorial Hospital’s way of giv-

ing something back to the community in the form of community-based health care.

### Why have a Nurse?

On average, more than 50 percent of pastoral visits are made to people with some kind of health issue. Many home visits end with the pastor saying, “Don’t forget to call your doctor as soon as I leave.” The Congregational Nurse is someone who can help these people with the specifics of their health needs and act as an advocate on their behalf.

The Congregational Nurse is also a great help when people return home from the hospital. At such times, a person’s needs may be more practical than spiritual, but they are important none the less. For example, the Nurse may need to explain again the instructions that were given when the person left the hospital (which seemed clear then but now seem fuzzy). Or she may need to connect the patient with care ministries or services in the church or community.

From the Congregational Nurse’s point of view, serving in this capacity offers an opportunity to practice holistic nursing. This type of care is generally not found in a hospital, a nursing home, or a doctor’s office. Caring for the mind, body, and spirit of a person puts that person on a pathway to total health and wellness. A person’s entire life-span—including health, illness, death, and grief—come under the Congregational Nurse’s care. And the spirits of all are nurtured in the process.

At South Bend First Brethren Church, after an interview and selection process that involved much

prayer, Penny Shepard (R.N.) began serving as Congregational Nurse at the end of December 1998. She spends 20 hours per week in ministry, providing health education, home and hospital visits, health screenings, and healthy life-style programs that benefit both the congregation and the community. She works the remainder of her week as an oncology nurse at Memorial Hospital and Hospice of Michiana.

Penny is a member of First Christian Church in South Bend, where she serves as an elder and as a member of a Praise Team led by Rev. Brad Hardesty. With the help of the Health Awareness Committee, chaired by Lorinda Wallin, she has already begun some healthy life-style programs at First Brethren: blood-pressure screenings on one Sunday a month; a mall-walking group called the Emmaus Walkers; and a bi-monthly Health Education Night that will deal with topics like stress reduction, summer safety, diabetes, first aid, and CPR. Other programs being considered include a



*South Bend’s Congregational Nurse Penny Shepard (l.) takes Margaret Henry’s blood pressure.*

Weigh-Down workshop, blood drives, and helping members of the congregation maintain up-to-date health histories and advanced directives.

The ministry of the Congregational Nurse and the Health Awareness Committee certainly is helping people in our congregation. It also helps to share the love of Jesus in practical ways to our community. Look around your congregation and your community for opportunities to partner with others in ministry. It will be a blessing to you and bring honor to Christ. [P]



# Celebrating the Birth of Two Oasis Community Church

AT 8:45 a.m. on Sunday, March 7, 1999, people began streaming from the parking lot into Shumway Elementary School in Chandler, Arizona, for the first public worship service of Oasis Community Church. A total of 165 people gathered in the cafeteria and several classrooms for the event. There was hardly a dry eye among the church's team members as they watched the first birth moments of this infant church.

Through songs that spoke of God's holiness and grace, in a message by Pastor Jim Miller that proclaimed that God is crazy about people, and through a drama that reinforced this message of love, God's undeniable presence was felt in the service.

Following the service, many of those who had come for worship stayed for birthday cake to celebrate the birth of this church. Pastors Jim Miller and Glenn Black fielded numerous inquiries during a question and answer session. Meanwhile, the children learned in their Discovery Class that Jesus is their Friend.

Two prospective Oasis members indicated on their response cards that they are interested in learning more about how to have a personal relationship with Jesus. Another

woman said that this was her first experience in a Christian church, and that she was trying to determine what part religion should play in the raising of her children.

## Answered prayers

The Oasis team was awed by God's many answers to their prayers, which resulted in the successful birth of the church. All team members were

***"Birth Sunday is over,  
but the adventure of  
Oasis has just begun."***

**— Pastor Jim Miller**

healthy enough to participate—even the lighting technician, who has had four operations in the last six months! Jenny Grumbling, who gave birth to a daughter three weeks prior to the opening service, overcame recovery complications and was able to sing on the worship team! Aly Pflugfelder recovered from the multiple bouts of bronchitis she has had since Christmas just in time to take charge of the nursery. Birth Sunday Project Director Grace Marsh recovered from an

asthma attack that occurred earlier in the week and was able to oversee the entire morning. Pastor Jim, after sending out an urgent prayer request, was able to resist the flu.

Just one week before birth Sunday, Prayer Director Becki Fulmer had her car window smashed and her Bible and purse stolen while she was spending a day in prayer for Oasis. She overcame this setback and spent birth Sunday in prayer as the services transpired. Nursery Director Aly Pflugfelder was a little upset when she learned that the company through which Oasis planned to hire nursery workers was unable to supply workers. However, three women from Tucson First Brethren Church came to the rescue!

## Sometimes you have to laugh

Oasis signs were so convincing (including one that covered the Shumway Elementary School sign) that one man wanted to know what our mortgage was on the place.

When we set up the cafeteria for the service, we pulled all the benches and tables outside to make more room. During the service, a bonafide desert dust storm kicked up, covering them with dust. Wiping down every crevice of those benches and tables certainly added to our tear-down duties!

The Thompsons, a couple who attended the service, were telling their neighbors about Oasis. The neighbors wondered if the Thompsons had placed an Oasis balloon on their front porch. The Thompsons said they hadn't, but added that in the morning's sermon they heard that God is crazy about people, so He must be crazy enough about their neighbors to blow a balloon onto their porch to invite them to church. There's the blessing of that dust storm.

## Before the Big Day

Much effort was sent getting ready for Birth Sunday at Oasis. Large postcards were sent three dif-

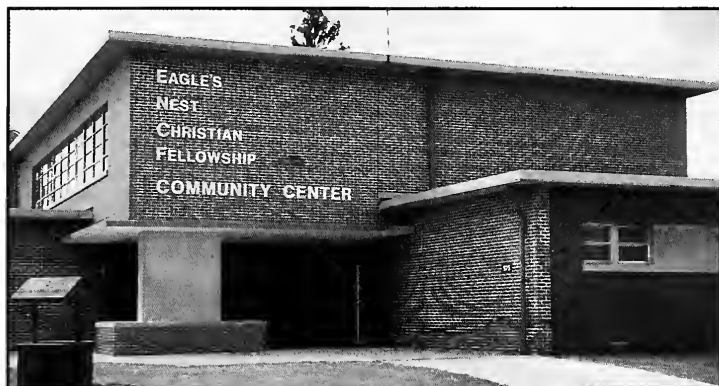
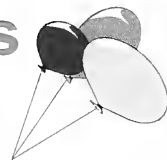
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Getting balloons ready for the celebration. On the building behind them, the Oasis Community Church sign covering the Shumway Elementary School sign was so convincing that one man asked how much the mortgage payments were on the building.

# More\* Brethren Congregations

## Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship



*The services of Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship are held in the Community Center at the Grissom Aeroplex near Peru, Indiana.*

**T**HE BIRTHING of the Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship on Sunday, March 21, 1999, was, in every way, a success. Success is dependent upon God and upon God's people being faithful to the vision that He has given them. Praise God for a core group of faithful followers of Jesus Christ!

On Birth Sunday every member of the core group was involved in some way in the service. Some helped in the parking lot, some were greeters, some served coffee and doughnuts, some worked with the children, some were ushers, others led worship. We believe that every person is of equal value and importance to the fulfilling of God's vision.

Ninety-four people attended our Birth-Sunday service. Of these, 20 were visitors from other Brethren churches. Of the other 74, approximately 35 were first-time visitors. Of these 35, about 90 percent came

back the second Sunday and brought friends or family with them. On Sunday evening of the second week, three new families attended.

The celebration service on Birth Sunday was truly a celebration and an exciting event. Three people re-dedicated their lives to the Lord during the service.

### Looking ahead

We are having an Easter Egg Hunt for our community the day before Easter and a yard clean-up day for those in our community who are physically unable to do this work

themselves. We will be starting three new small groups in April and beginning junior-high and senior-high ministries with a concert on April 25.

We have grown every month since we have been in our building, and we look forward to those people whom God will be bringing to us in the future.

— Rev. Jim Thomas, Pastor

*(continued from page 6)*

ferent times to 30,000 homes near Shumway Elementary during a two-week period prior to March 7. Calls were received almost daily for two weeks asking for information about the church.

In late February the Oasis team did a prayer walk through the Shumway neighborhood to prepare for the mailings. And on March 1 the team distributed nearly 1,000 water bottles in the neighborhood. The bottles had the Oasis logo on the outside and a flyer about the church and the grand opening on the inside. Then two weeks before the opening service, a "practice Sunday" was staged. Four new families showed up on that day because they ignored the date on the first mailing! I guess they couldn't wait!

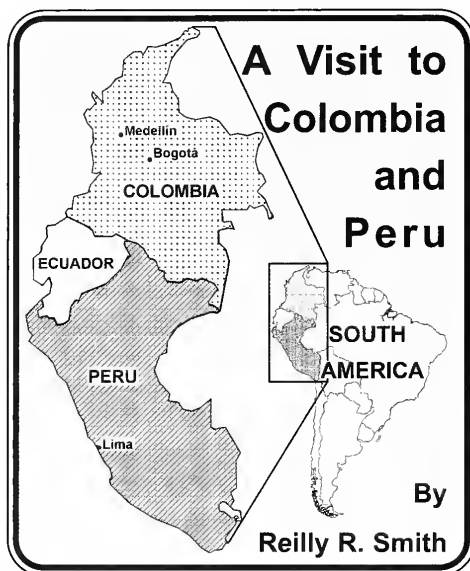
— Mrs. Ann Miller, pastor's wife



*The building being leased by Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship is an excellent facility that provides plenty of room for growth.*

\*Birth Sundays of the Grace Community Church in Winchester, Virginia, on September 27, 1998, and of the Rock Springs Community Church in Vista, California, on October 4, 1998, were reported in the November 1998 issue of the EVANGELIST (pp. 6 & 7).





**I**N JANUARY I enjoyed several very positive events and wonderful times of ministry during an administrative visit to our Brethren mission work in Colombia and Peru. During my time in Colombia, I also experienced my first earthquake—from a very safe distance. Even so, feeling the earth move under my feet was a bit unnerving, especially when we learned about the devastation the quake caused in the region around Armenia. When I left Colombia just a couple of days later, World Relief teams were already arriving to bring aid to victims of the quake.

I arrived in Medellín, Colombia, in time to preach at the annual confer-

ence was wonderful!

On Sunday evening, I preached at the Ferrara church. Again more than 60 people attended. The Holy Spirit moved in a powerful way, and many people were touched. This congregation is led by Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri. Under their leadership, the church is making progress in many areas. Several young people are preparing for Christian ministry; the women's group is growing; Adriana is training teachers and workers for Christian education; and Marcelo is raising up leaders for the local church.

I spent the next two days with

Marcelo and Adriana, learning about their plans for the future. This young couple has helped the Ferrara church develop a remarkable seven-year plan for growth and expansion. So far the congregation has purchased a new sound system, put a roof over the second story of the church building, moved the kitchen and restrooms to enlarge the worship area, and added a classroom and fellowship area upstairs. The congregation accomplished this without any financial help from the national church or from Brethren Missions.

The Campo Valdes congregation hosted the conference. More than 60 people from the Ferrara congregation—also in Medellín—attended the gathering, plus half a dozen from the Villa del Rio congregation in Bogotá. This was five more from this congregation than I had ever seen before at the conference. The worship service at the gather-

ing was wonderful!



Rev. Reilly Smith (l.) with (l. to r.) Adriana, Marcelo, and Jana Ferreri in Medellín, Colombia.

The church is also saving funds for property acquisition, as attendance continues to increase. The need for this is evident, for people already have to stand on the sidewalk outside the door during worship services, because the present building is too small for everyone to get in.

The Ferreris and I also drew up a tentative *mission contingency plan* to provide guidance in case a state of emergency would make it necessary for them to leave Colombia quickly. We developed the plan because of a report I received while in Colombia from an intermission agency that advised missions agencies to develop such plans in case rebel activities occurred this spring. The report cited intelligence information indicating that insurgencies might be planned. Reports like this remind us of our need to pray regularly for Marcelo and Adriana.

On Wednesday I flew to Bogotá to preach at the Villa del Rio church and to meet with local church leaders. The Holy Spirit moved again, and



Sunday morning worship service at the Ferrara Brethren Church in Medellín, Colombia.



God's presence descended upon the people and bathed us in His love.

I also helped local leaders of the Villa del Rio church resolve some internal conflict, and I taught them to follow their own church leaders in Colombia rather than asking me to solve their problems. As a result, when Marcelo and Adriana came to Bogotá a few weeks later, they were able to work with more authority to resolve the local issues, because I had expressed confidence in them and refused to circumvent or overrule the national leaders.



*Rev. Reilly Smith and Pastor Miguel Antúnez (l.), with a woman and her daughter in whose home a new ministry has been started in Lima, Peru.*

While in Bogotá, I also visited the offices, seminary, and publishing company of the Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren Churches. They are developing some curricula that should be very helpful to Brethren churches not only in Colombia, but also throughout South America. Sharing office space with the Mennonite book store is Servicom, an interdenominational media ministry in which the Brethren have played a major part. Claudia Rodríguez runs the ministry. Her husband, Fabio, is pastor of the Villa del Rio congregation and president of The Brethren Church in Colombia.

On Thursday I flew to Lima, Peru, to spend time with Brethren missionaries Miguel and Sonia Antúnez and their son Carlos. We spent Friday talking about the progress of the ministry there and discussing plans for the future.

Friday evening, Miguel and Machi Pandura led a group of 24 young people in games, Bible study, and

worship. Machi rejoined Miguel as a worker in the local church after spending about a year working with Word of Life Mission. He is also assisting Miguel begin a new ministry across town in an underdeveloped section of Lima. Miguel and Machi hope to start a church there and to train local people to lead it.

On Saturday the church had an ordination service for Miguel, during which I preached the sermon and laid hands on Miguel. One of Miguel's ministry friends translated and assisted me with the service.

About 50 people attended, including Miguel's and Sonia's parents. Both fathers are drawing closer to the Lord, and both are now supportive of Miguel and Sonia in their ministry. This represents wonderful progress.

Sunday is always a full day for the Brethren in Peru. Sunday school in the morning for children and youth—about 25 of them; a trip across town to the new work for Sunday school and worship with the children, youth, and a handful of their parents—about 25 more; and a worship service at the church on Sunday evening—with 50 to 55 in attendance.

We spent the whole day on the run, but we had a wonderful time doing God's work. The worship center has been altered to accommodate about 15 more people than previously.

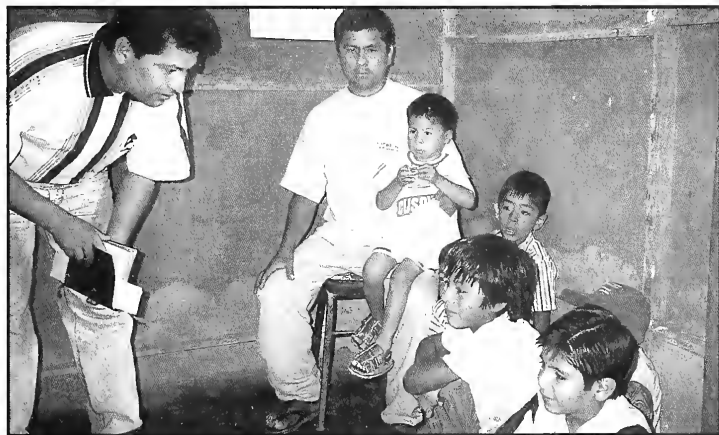
Now it is jammed full again. The congregation needs to add beams and a second story in order to adequately provide for growth. The building could seat up to 150 people without buying more property. Construction will cost about \$50,000.

I spent Monday talking more with the Antúnez family about the work in Peru. Son Carlos is planning to come to the United States to study at Ashland University. After his studies, he will likely play a support role in the mission work in Lima. He is a good musician and a young leader with tremendous potential. Sonia's sister, Laura, is considering coming to the U.S. to study at Ashland Theological Seminary. She may ultimately become part of the leadership staff of the church in Peru, whether or not she can come to the United States.

Miguel is not well known among U.S. Brethren because he is not able to come here and visit our churches. As a result, support for the work in Lima is more difficult to raise than for any other Brethren Missions field. Please pray regularly for the Antúnez family, and consider a special gift towards the building project.

On Tuesday I left Peru and returned to the U.S. I arrived home tired but greatly blessed by the time I had spent with our Brethren in Colombia and Peru. [✠]

*Rev. Smith is Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church.*



*Machi Pandura (l.) leads a Bible study for children in an outreach ministry that he and Miguel Antúnez have begun in an underdeveloped section of Lima, Peru.*

## Word Snapshots of Brethren International Missionary Ministries

**F**OLLOWING is a brief field-by-field description of Brethren International Missionary Ministries. The list of activities is not exhaustive, nor is this a complete list of God's people working in each field. Our hope is that these descriptions will give you a snapshot of what's happening in Brethren Missions around the world.

More-detailed information (though still not complete) is included each month in the "Highlighting" section of *Prayer and Praise*. In addition, up-to-date picture and information packets about Brethren missionaries will be sent to every church very soon. Also watch for *Insight*, which is published from time to time and contains in-depth information about Brethren Missions.

### Africa

**Djibouti** — Brethren Church members Mark and Chantal Logan serve in the small African country of Djibouti with Eastern Mennonite Missions. Mark directs the mission there, and Chantal teaches high-school French. They also serve in a local Protestant congregation, reach out to Somali refugees, and actively engage in friendship evangelism. Brethren Missions helps with support funds. The Logans will spend some time in the U.S. this summer.

### Asia

**India** — Dr. K. Prasanth and Nir-mala Kumar lead Brethren Mission in India. Serving with them are their son Sudhir and his wife Latha. The mission carries on an aggressive program of evangelism and church extension, starting 20 new churches each year. In addition, the mission operates an orphanage for boys and one for girls, several vocational schools, an extension Bible Institute, Christian reading rooms; a hospital, and a mobile medical clinic. With assistance from World Relief, Brethren Mission also provides clean water, food, medical supplies,

clothing, and shelter to disaster victims. The ministry of the mission could be expanded by opening a residential Bible institute in Rajahmundry. Scholarships for students are \$50 per month. Sponsorships for village pastors are \$35 per month; for orphans, \$21 per month.

**Malaysia** — David and Jenny Loi head up Brethren Mission work in Malaysia, and David pastors a church in Johor Baru. Five hundred miles to the north, David Chew is the pastor of a Brethren congregation in Penang. The Penang congregation built the first legally authorized Brethren worship center in Malaysia. David and Jenny are planning to start another church within the next five years in West Malaysia.

### Latin America

**Argentina** — Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez head the ministry of South American Theological Seminary (STS), which seeks to prepare leaders for the Argentine Brethren Church and for other churches in South America. The seminary is currently training more than 120 future church leaders, pastors, and missionaries. Two young women from Argentina, Marcela Rivero and Monica Santiago, will begin studying at Ashland Theological Seminary this fall, with plans to join the STS faculty when they graduate.

**Colombia** — Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri, missionaries to Colombia from the Argentine Brethren Church, lead the Ferrara church in Medellín. They are also training leaders for the Campo Valdes church in Medellín. In addition, they are developing disciple-making and leadership training processes for all the Brethren in Colombia. They are nearly two years ahead of schedule in their development ministry. A third Brethren congregation, the Villa del Rio church, is located in Bogotá, where Fabio Rodriguez is the pastor.

**Mexico** — Todd and Tracy Ruggles serve in Mexico City, where Todd is administrator of Brethren mission work. The Mexican Brethren are planting several churches around the city. Todd and Tracy are actively involved in discipleship, training, and church planting ministries. In addition, Tracy teaches, trains teachers, and operates a community health awareness ministry. Assisting the Ruggles and the Mexican Brethren Church is Jen Thomas. Though a member of The Brethren Church, Jen serves in Mexico with Spearhead, a division of Latin America Mission. Part of her support comes from The Brethren Church.

**Peru** — Miguel and Sonia Antúnez serve in Lima, Peru. Their ministry is growing despite various trials and the limitations of their church building. The church remodeled the building to accommodate a few more people, but they need to add a second story to expand their worship capacity from 50 to 150. Sonia teaches in a Christian School. Machi Pandura leads the youth group, which is growing rapidly under his leadership. Miguel and Machi are also starting a second congregation in another part of Lima.

**Paraguay** — Claudio and Karina Castelli lead Iglesia de la Esperanza (Hope Church) in Asunción, Paraguay. They serve under the *Comision Misionera* of The Brethren Church in Argentina. The Brethren in Asunción are starting outreaches in other parts of the city and are planning new work in some interior cities. We assist The Brethren Church of Argentina in supporting this mission work.

### World Relief

Brethren giving to World Relief increased significantly during the past year in response to great needs in Southern Sudan and Central America. I saw the need in Southern Sudan first hand in October when I went there with a team led by Dr. Clive Calver, president of World Relief.

Thank you for your faithful support of Brethren Missionary Ministries.

— Reilly R. Smith, Director

## Pastors and their spouses retreat to Florida to focus on ways of providing mutual care

**Bradenton, Fla.** — Forty-nine pastors and elders, 39 wives, and 12 children (100 in all) enjoyed a few days in Florida March 2-4 while attending the annual retreat for Brethren pastors and spouses.

"Ongoing Care for Each Other" was the theme of the retreat, held at the Christian Retreat Center near Bradenton. Rev. Roger Charman, manager of pastoral ministries at Focus on the Family, was the main

best programs), competition from the electronic church (TV and radio preachers), and the low priority many people put on the church all take their toll on the pastor. Personal factors such as viewing God as a spiritual taskmaster rather than a loving father, spiritual pride, and taking a worldly view of success can also contribute to spiritual burnout.

Charman urged the pastors to be alert for signs of burnout—sleepless-

ness, low interest level, feelings of guilt, exhaustion, poor concentration, loss of appetite, and thoughts of suicide. If these signs are present, appropriate steps must be taken.

He made a number of suggestions for preventing and relieving burn-

out—taking care of oneself physically (rest, exercise, eating right); taking care of oneself spiritually (personal devotions, holy living, resisting temptation); being oneself (using the gifts God has given you,



not imitating others, excelling at what you do well); sharing the load (equipping, teaching, and delegating; letting others minister to you); and basking in the love of God (who loves you as His own dear child whether you succeed or fail).

On Wednesday evening, retreat participants had a chance to respond to the retreat theme and to Rev. Charman's messages. Divided into three groups, they shared their thoughts on nine questions related to the emotional and spiritual support they receive from and give to others, and how this support system could be improved. In the reporting session that followed, one message that came through clearly was that emotional and spiritual support comes through relationships with others, and that pastors need to take the initiative in establishing these relationships.

The retreat program took a different turn (at a different location) on Thursday morning, when the group moved from the Christian Retreat Center to Sarasota First Brethren

(continued on next page)



Speaker Roger Charman (r.) of Focus on the Family, sitting here with the Garrett brothers, Pastors Jim (l.) and John, dealt with the problem of pastor burnout and dropout at the Brethren retreat.

speaker. His three messages looked at "The Problem of Pastor Burnout and Dropout," "Dealing With and Preventing Pastor Burnout," and "The Seduction of Success."

Charman noted that pastoral families are not immune to the problems other families in our society face—divorce, financial crisis, behavior problems in children, etc. But pastoral work adds its own difficulties. Pastors often feel isolated and lonely. They suffer from feelings of inadequacy because of the many "hats" they must wear. They feel pressure to have an ideal family. And they see themselves as subject to the whims of their congregations (one-third of pastors have been through a forced termination).

The state of the church today adds to the pastor's problems. Lack of church growth, the consumer mentality of members (looking for the



The Florida Band, (l. to r.) Carolyn Solomon (keyboardist), David Stone, Grant Showalter, Daniel Rosales, Kelvin Rodriguez, and songleader Jill Stone (not shown), a group that formed just for the event, added a nice Latin sound to group singing at the retreat.



## Briefly Noted



**Rev. Dennis E. Sigle**, pastor of the Burlington, Ind., First Brethren Church, received a Master of Divinity degree in January from Andersonville Baptist Seminary, Camilla, Ga. Rev. Sigle has served as a pastor in The Brethren Church for the past 12 years—from 1986 to 1992 at the Derby, Kans., First Brethren Church and since 1992 at Burlington First Brethren. He is currently moderator-elect of the Indiana District.

**Cross Keys Worship Center**, a young Brethren congregation near Port Republic, Va., pastored by Rev. Patrick Velanzon, had a TGIF Soup Supper on January 22. Three big pots of soup, a roomful of people, and a dozen "pickers" of various stringed instruments added up to a wonderful and fun Friday evening. Joining the group for the evening were St. James, Maryland, Brethren Church pastor Dr. Brian Moore and his wife Amanda. Dr. Moore, as a member of the District Board of Overseers, encourages the ministry of Cross Keys Worship Center. [✚]

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Church for a concluding session—"A Practical Approach to Biblical Finances" led by Mr. Jim Frado, Manager of Stewardship and Planned Giving for The Brethren Church. Mr. Frado spoke about challenges to family finances for persons in ministry, talked about the need for careful budgeting, and provided suggestions for setting up a family budget.

The retreat concluded at mid-day on Thursday with a dinner cruise around Sarasota Bay on the paddle-wheel boat Marina Jack II. While enjoying a fine dinner, the Brethren group enjoyed viewing the mansions that surround the bay. This elegant ending to the retreat was made pos-

## María Miranda receives Silver Angel award for her Spanish radio program *Para Ti Mujer*

**Hollywood, Calif.** — The Brethren Church's own María Miranda was awarded a Silver Angel, one of the highest honors in communications, at the International Angel Awards ceremony held February 25 at the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood. She received the award, which is sponsored by a organization known as Excellence in Media, for the best Spanish Women's Radio Program.

With Mrs. Miranda when she accepted the award was her husband of 45 years, Dr. Juan Carlos Miranda, the program's producer and a faculty member of Columbia Biblical Seminary and School of Missions in South Carolina.

The Spanish language program, *Para Ti Mujer* ("For You, My Dear Lady"), supported in part by groups and individuals in The Brethren Church, is now in its 20th year of existence. It is broadcast more than 1,200 times a day throughout North, Central, and South America, and the program has such a large audience that National Religious Broadcasters has called Mrs. Miranda "the most-listened to woman" in the Spanish-speaking Americas.

A few of the others receiving Angel awards were Roma Downey of the television series *Touched by an Angel*, Gerald McRaney of the TV series *Promised Land*, and the animated film *The Prince of Egypt*. [✚]



María Miranda and Roma Downey (of the television series "Touched by an Angel") holding their Angel awards.

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sible in part through the generosity of Sarasota First Brethren Church, which used a title of a bequest it had received to subsidize the cruise.

The retreat was planned by pastors and wives of the Florida District. Rev. David Stone, pastor of Sarasota First Brethren, presided at the sessions, his wife Jill led worship and singing, and Rev. Phil Lersch gave announcements and looked after many of the details of the sessions. Pastors Daniel Rosales and Buck Garrett assisted with transportation. Financial assistance for securing the speaker was provided by The Carpenter's Shop, the Brethren bookstore in Ashland, Ohio. [✚]

— reported by Editor Dick Winfield

# The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 121, No. 5

A newsletter for Brethren people

May 1999

## When You've Lost Your Way

By Rob Frost

**M**Y FAMILY KNOWS that I'm always losing things—my car keys, my diary, and even my checkbook! Whenever I cry, "Has anyone seen my . . . ?" my wife replies, "When did you last see it?" I must retrace my steps and go back to where I last saw it.

At times when my mission has been going wrong, when the work has been difficult, the results negligible, or when I feel I've failed, I know there's only one way ahead: I must retrace my steps to the One who sent me.

### A carefree morning

One morning I walked past Whitby Abbey and down the hundred and ninety-nine steps to the old town below. Everything was still—it was too early for tourists! The narrow streets were empty and deserted save for the clatter of a distant milk truck. I paused to look in the tiny

shop windows. I was in no hurry; the morning was mine.

### Good to be alive

I ambled down the cobbled streets; it felt good to be alive. As I crossed the harbor bridge, I paused to look out to sea. In the distance there was a line of small fishing boats chugging out of the morning mist toward me. Sea gulls wheeled above them, hoping for a share of the catch. It was a beautiful sight.

It was one of those timeless mornings: no pressure, no rush, no impending deadlines. The air of calm and stillness enveloped me. I was aware that Jesus was with me. I drank in the sights and sounds of that peaceful morning scene and praised Him for His goodness.

Within a few minutes the boats were moored alongside the quay and the fish market was a hive of activity. A squeaky crane was hauling

crates of dripping fish from the decks of the laden boats, and there was a noisy babble of conversation all around.

I saw a larger boat moored beside the quay. As I moved closer, I noticed a group of fisherman bending low over their nets. Slowly they dragged the huge trawl-net across the deck. Whenever they found a tear, they took some orange twine and repaired it. As I stood and watched, my mind raced back to another group of fishermen by the waterside long ago.

### "Do you love Me?"

"Peter, do you love Me?"

There were a hundred and one things that Jesus could have talked about. There was the work of evangelism, the mission of the church, and the future of the kingdom for a start! But Jesus knew that He only had to get one thing straight.

Love had to be the starting point. Peter had to get this sorted out before the breathtaking story of Acts could unfold. If this was right, then everything else would fall into place.

But what a question! Hadn't Peter

*(continued on next page)*



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is in the center of this issue

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given enough by leaving everything behind to follow Jesus? Hadn't he risked enough by staking his reputation on a wandering teacher? Hadn't

he done enough, this Peter the rock, on whom the church would be built?

No. Peter's denial before the cock-crow had to be faced. His unfaithfulness had to be dealt with. All the

sacrifices and all the good deeds didn't mean anything unless he could look Jesus in the eye and say, "I love You."

"Peter, do you love Me more than these?"

The boat, the fish, the tackle. The business, the livelihood, the culture of the Galilean fisherman. The camaraderie of the crew, the good times on the lake. The family, the friends, the faithful crew. The safe, ordered life passed on down the generations of Galilean fishermen. Did he really love Jesus more than these?

Peter's love for Jesus couldn't be a divided love. It had to be a love that outweighed every human consideration; a love that Jesus warned might demand the ultimate sacrifice—a love without compromise.

Three times the question came; three times the answer given—without hesitation, confident, assured. And so the work could begin: "Feed My sheep."

This is the love which lies at the heart of the Christian life. Christian lifestyle begins with a self-denial relationship which declares, "Jesus, I love You."

Today, retrace your steps to Jesus. Past all the complex difficulties and dilemmas of your life. Past all the broken promises and ruins of your discipleship. Past all the failures of the years. Go back to Jesus and tell Him that you love Him. [✠]

Mr. Frost is an evangelist in Great Britain and the leader of Seed Teams, an evangelistic program in Great Britain, France, Poland, and Estonia. He also takes more than 500 people each year on Share Jesus Missions. This article is an excerpt from his book, *Living Waters for Your Parched Prayers*, Chariot Victor Publishing. The article was provided by the publisher and is used by permission.

## Bauer Blasts Moral Polluters

GARY BAUER, former president of the Family Research Council, has criticized Gerald Levin, chairman of Time Warner, for a recent statement in which Levin tried to absolve Hollywood of a role in the recent school shootings in Littleton, Colorado.

Levin had said that what happened in Littleton was a gun problem, not a Hollywood problem.

"Time Warner and so many other major Hollywood studios are major moral polluters," Bauer claimed. "In the way that our air and water is polluted by chemicals and foul materials, so our cultural air is daily polluted by studios that get rich off pumping the most base, violent, explicit, repugnant images and sounds into our kids' hearts and minds. When are Levin and his crowd going to wake up to what they are contributing to American culture?" Bauer asked.

"How can [Levin] witness what happened in Littleton, and what is happening to American culture, and conclude that what our children hear in some music and see on TV, the Internet, and in movies . . . has no consequences?" Bauer continued. "Of course there are consequences to moral pollution, just as there are consequences to air and water pollution.

"Levin's is an outrageous statement, tragically laughable, emblematic of most of what is wrong with Hollywood these days, and highly irresponsible.

"Too many people are getting rich by immersing our children in a culture of death. If you pump out noble, inspiring, beautiful images and sounds, kids respond in kind.\* And if you pump out ignoble, uninspiring, ugly images and sounds, kids respond in kind. Hollywood too often plays not to the better [aspects] of our nature, but to the worst," Bauer said. [✠]

**Editor's note:** While agreeing with Mr. Bauer's comments, I believe there is plenty of blame to go around for what happened in Littleton. It might include parents who do not monitor the viewing habits and behavior of their children and who fail to exert positive influences on them; gun manufacturers and dealers that promote the sale of weapons; groups that oppose gun control legislation; and schools that no longer exert a strong moral influence on the lives of students.

\*Compare Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

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## Pontius' Puddle



© Joel Kaufmann

# Welcoming Millennial Teens into the life of the church

By Dan Lawson

*Even when I am old and gray,  
do not forsake me, Oh God,  
till I declare your power to the next  
generation,  
your might to all who are to  
come.*

Psalms 71:18, NIV

**M**ILLENNIAL TEENS are very different in their actions and behavior from previous generations of teens. As I have tried to show in previous months' articles, this is not a bad thing. Millennial Teens are more passionate and authentic; they long to be connected; they desperately want to be safe; and they want to matter. So what can we do as a church to include the Millennial generation?

## Welcome them

We need to welcome Millennial Teens as a vital part of the church. They are not just the church of tomorrow; they are here with us now, and they want to be a part of the church of today. As a church, we need to give them a place to belong. If we don't give them this opportunity, what other alternatives do they have and where else will they go?

We can include them in the church in a variety of ways, not the least of which is simply knowing their names. Make an effort to speak to the teens in your church, and use their names when you talk to them. Look behind the facade of their appearance and see the real person that lies beneath the exterior. We shouldn't expect them to look like us and act the way we do. They aren't us. Give them the freedom to be who they are.

Perhaps the best things we can do to include Millennial Teens in our churches today are pray for

them and be spiritual mentors for them. A strong bond is formed between people when they pray for and with each other. They form a cord of three strands (the two of them and God), which cannot easily be broken (*compare Ecclesiastes 4:12*).

## Embrace change

Eddie Giggis once said, "Even with the most sophisticated approaches the church is running to catch up with the 1980's." I am afraid this is all too true. I once heard a speaker say, "The church is perfectly prepared to do ministry in the world today if we could only get 1950 to happen all over again."

While I think our churches are much more progressive than that, we do need to ask ourselves, "Do we allow our teens to bring healthy change into our church?" Do we make changes in our worship to include them? Could our teens "skank" to the songs that we sing in church today? (Are you scratching your head right now trying to

figure out what "skank" is? If so, ask a Millennial Teen.)

Too often adults judge Millennial Teens by their outward appearance rather than by what is in their hearts. I recently heard of a 15-year-old girl who came to church and joined the choir. One Sunday while singing in the choir, she chose to worship God with free expression. She closed her eyes, lifted her hands, and glorified God in her heart.

**"Perhaps the best things we can do to include Millennial Teens in our churches today are pray for them and be spiritual mentors for them."**

The reaction of the congregation was to stop singing, stare and point at her freedom of expression. And if that was not bad enough, after the service several people went up to her, told her how badly she had embarrassed herself, and proceeded to criticize her clothes, her makeup, her jewelry, and her general appearance. The girl now worships in another church. We can be grateful that her love for God kept her from giving up on the church all together.

## Bring wholeness

In the past we have fragmented our churches and communities into Baby Boomers, Busters, GenXers, etc. While this helps us identify the needs of these various groups, it can also create feelings of isolation. We also run the risk of leaving someone out.

God intends for His church to be made up of *all* His people, including Millennial Teens. Let's make a place for them in our churches and in our hearts. [✠]

*Dr. Lawson is senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. This is one in a series of articles in which he applies Bible truth to our personal lives.*





# Gaining Victory Over Sexual Temptation

**Danger!  
Strong  
Undertow**

## *Sexual Temptation*

**By Robert Westfall**

**J**ERRY WHITE of the Navigators relates an experience he had in Thailand a few years ago. He and his wife were invited by some close friends to spend a few days of vacation at a seaside resort. The setting was incredibly beautiful—small cabins perched on a wooded hillside above a lovely cove.

The first afternoon Jerry walked down to a small beach nestled between the rocks. He decided to go for a swim. He was enjoying the warm tropical water as he swam out about 100 feet from the deserted beach.

When he turned back toward the shore, however, he discovered that he was caught in an outgoing current and couldn't make any headway swimming toward the beach. He envisioned himself being swept out to sea and drowning. But then he figured out that if he swam parallel to the beach, he could make it to the rocky point. When he got there, however, he found that the sea bottom was coral. He made it out, but not without plenty of cuts on his hands and feet.

Later that evening, when Jerry and his wife joined the other couple for dinner, Jerry told his story. His friend got a funny look on his face and then confessed that he'd had exactly the same experience about a half-hour before Jerry did. He had to call for a lifeguard to help him.\*

Sexual temptation is a lot like what

happened to Jerry and his friend. It appears so pleasant and enjoyable, but then you get caught in the undertow. You have to struggle to get free, and you often get bruised and lacerated in the process. Sadly, many people don't realize the danger they are in until it's too late.

So what can we do to avoid getting caught in the undertow of sexual temptation? I'd like to suggest six practical steps.


### **Step One: Keep all your batteries charged**

The first practical step to victory over sexual temptation is to keep all our "batteries" charged.

F. B. Meyer used a striking analogy to illustrate how it is possible to be victorious. He wrote, "When I was a boy, I'd go to the Polytechnic in London where my favorite diversion was a diving bell. It had seats around the rim, where people could sit while it was lowered into a tank. We used to go down deeper and deeper into the water, but not a drop ever came into that diving bell, though it had no bottom and the water was quite within reach. You see, the bell was so full of air that though the water 'Lusted against' the air and the air 'Lusted against' the water, because air was being pumped in all the time from the top, the water could not do what it otherwise would."

The first battery to keep charged is our spiritual battery. We must guard our relationship with

God. Solomon wrote, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the well-spring of life" (Prov. 4:23)\* Devotion to Christ serves to satisfy our deepest longings and to quell our lusts. But when our love for Christ is on the wane, we get restless for something more, and our resolve in every area begins to weaken.

The second battery is our  mental battery. We are to guard our minds against romantic and sexual fantasies. "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5) Our predominant thoughts determine our inevitable actions. What we think in our hearts is what we eventually do. Most moral failures aren't blowouts (hardly anyone plans an adulterous affair). Rather, they are like slow leaks—the result of a thousand small indulgences, the consequences of which are not immediately apparent.


How do we deal with our erotic thoughts? We need to re-channel them. Such thoughts occur, but they can be controlled. When sexual fantasies intrude on our minds, we have two choices. We can entertain them, in which case they will become an obsession. Or we can sidetrack them into devotion, meditation, and prayer (see Philipians 4:8).

\*All quotations from the Bible are from the *New International Version*.

\**Dangers Men Face* by Jerry White. NavPress, 1997. Pages 82-83.



For example, if you wanted to stop thinking about the number eight but all you did was tell yourself to stop thinking about eight, what would you be thinking about? The number eight. But if you focused on twelve, what would you be thinking about? The number twelve.

The third and fourth batteries  are our physical and emotional batteries. We need to guard against physical and emotional exhaustion. First Kings 19:1-8 records Elijah's flight to Horeb after his encounter with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Elijah made fools of Baal's prophets, and God used him in a mighty way to display His glory.

This encounter left Elijah physically and emotionally exhausted—so much so that when he heard that Queen Jezebel wanted him killed, he ran scared and cried out to God to die. Why did he cower in fear of Jezebel after fearlessly facing the prophets of Baal? It was because his physical and emotional batteries were low. We need to keep ourselves from exhaustion, know how to protect ourselves when we do become exhausted, and slowly recharge our physical and emotional batteries when they become low.

## Step Two: Avoid emotional intimacy

The second practical step to victory over sexual temptation is to avoid emotional intimacy with someone of the opposite sex. One way to do this is to guard against infatuation. It's not lust but infatuation that leads to our downfall. Do we think about one person frequently? Do we look for excuses to be with that person?

Most erotic relationships begin with this kind of subtle attraction. If we find ourselves drawn to another person, we must go no further. Don't eat lunch or travel or spend time alone with that person. If required to meet for business, do so in the company of others.

Another way to avoid emotional intimacy with someone of the opposite sex is to share the secrets of our hearts and our deepest longings only with our mates or with a responsible person of the same sex. The greatest mistake we can make is to share these things and our marital disappointments with someone of the op-

posite sex. Nothing else so radically shifts the nature of a relationship.

A third way to avoid emotional intimacy with another is by working hard at maintaining the romance and rekindling the love and passion in our own marriages. Men and women who get into trouble usually do so because they've allowed their marriages to drift—to become dull and unfriendly. We must continually court our mate.

A fourth way to avoid emotional intimacy with another is by publicizing our home life. We do this by talking lovingly of our mate and by surrounding ourselves with reminders of our marriages.

## Step Three: Flee from tempting situations

The third practical step to victory over sexual temptation is to avoid or flee from from tempting situations.

Joseph was a man of God who, when caught in a compromising situation, didn't wait to see what might happen. Moses wrote, "[Potiphar's wife] caught him by his cloak and said, 'Come to bed with me!' But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house" (Gen. 39:12; compare Proverbs chapters 5 & 7).

Occasionally a man will meet a woman who pursues him with crafty intent. And women are endangered by men who will tell them anything they want to hear in order to have what they want. More often, however, we put ourselves in sin's way by going somewhere either physically or mentally (via television, books, magazines, or the Internet) that puts us in temptation's way. A good way to keep from sinning is to run away from temptation; a better way yet is to avoid it in the first place.

## Step Four: Rehearse the consequences

The fourth practical step to victory over sexual temptation is to regularly rehearse the consequences of sexual immorality. Let's face it, sin is fun. If it weren't, we wouldn't do it. But the fun lasts a very short time.

The author of Hebrews wrote, "[Moses] chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time" (Heb. 11:25). We need to ask ourselves if the fleeting pleasure

of sexual sin is worth the consequences? Is it worth family and reputation? Is a moment of pleasure worth the pain and guilt that follow? Is it really worth ruining my life for? (*If you don't think sexual immorality will do this, see the article "Escaping Sexual Suicide" in last month's issue of the EVANGELIST.*)

## Step Five: Find someone to hold you accountable

The fifth practical step to victory over sexual temptation is to find someone who will hold you accountable. Find a non-judgmental friend who loves you and who won't flinch when you're honest, but who will ask you the tough questions. Paul instructs us to "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2)

## Step Six: Ask God to guard you

The last practical step to victory over sexual temptation is to ask God to guard you every moment of the day. We need to daily go into the presence of the almighty, sovereign God and seek His protecting hand upon us. David prayed:

*Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
for I am lonely and afflicted.  
The troubles of my heart have multiplied;  
free me from my anguish.  
Look upon my affliction and my distress  
and take away all my sins.  
See how my enemies have increased  
and how fiercely they hate me!  
Guard my life and rescue me;  
let me not be put to shame,  
for I take refuge in you.*

Psalms 25:16-20

We're never safe. We're in danger whether we are young or old; single or married; in the dumps or on a roll. We'll never be home free until we get Home!

We can have victory over sexual temptation in spite of our vulnerability to it. The key is to know how vulnerable we are, always be on the alert, and put into action these six practical steps to gaining victory. Jesus instructed, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak" (Matt. 26:41). [✠]

*Rev Westfall is pastor of the First Brethren Church in Pleasant Hill, Ohio.*

# Brethren Youth: Answering God's Call

By Jaime Gillespie

**G**OD HAS SURELY BLESSED the youth of The Brethren Church! From Summer Ministries to Sunday school to Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) programs, the youth of our church have been touched by the hand of God. They have been called to serve Him, and they are doing so every day!

In today's society of children taking guns to school, casual sex, divorce, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, AIDS, and any other bad images you can dream up, it's hard to imagine that there is any hope for today's youth. But the good news is: there is hope!

## Reasons for hope

That hope is the ever-growing number of devoted Christian young people who are infiltrating our schools and communities every day! It's a hope that comes when we see a high school student stand up to a biology teacher and say that God created the world—not evolution; a hope that comes when a group of students from one of our own churches fights to install a Bible club in their school and to gain permission to pray as a group on school property. These are the youth whom God has called and convicted to reach out to a generation of young people who confront Satan every day when they walk into school.

Who are these youth? Look around your own church and you'll see them! We don't have to go far to find youth who are impacting this world for Jesus Christ! The youth of The Brethren Church are on the front lines in this fight against Satan!

Thanks to you—their parents, teachers, pastors, youth advisors, and friends—our youth have been led into the arms of Jesus Christ and have been blessed by Him. They have grown from those little kids who made it through the worship service by drawing on the offering

envelopes to young men and women who are dedicating their lives in service to the King!

The Brethren Church has a strong future ahead of it. Every year we see new Brethren congregations being planted across our country and new people becoming members of our established churches. We also see more and more young people stepping forward as leaders.

## A new dilemma

So now we face a new dilemma—what do we do with all of these young people who are passionate about serving the Lord? Do we make them wait until they have a seminary degree or at least until they are just a little older? I pray that you don't! God used children and infants to silence God's enemies in the time of Jesus (see *Mark 10:14–16* and compare *Psalm 8*). And

Paul told Timothy not to let people look down on him because of his youthfulness, but instead to use the gifts God had given him and thus fulfill the call God had placed on his life (1 Timothy 4). God has called our youth into His service, and He gives us as a church the responsibility to support and encourage them and to provide them opportunities to use their gifts.

May has been designated *Youth and Christian Education Month* in The Brethren Church. Therefore, I encourage you to find ways this month to support the youth of your church! As a church, strive to find ways to include your youth in your ministries. Ask a teen to serve as song leader or to read scripture. Maybe there is even a talented young person in your church who could give the pastor a break and preach some Sunday this month! Our teens are definitely willing to use their skills and talents to serve God, and they are more than capable of doing so.

## Prayers and finances

I also urge you to support your youth through your prayers and your financial giving. Buy a pizza or a hoagie sandwich the next time a youth member comes around selling them. Or offer to help them out with their BYIC Convention registration fees! You can also support the national youth ministry by sending an offering to The Brethren Church marked for Youth Month support. Such contributions will be used to continue and expand the current youth programs of the church!

God has blessed our youth with talent and passion, and He has empowered them to do His work! I hope that you will be a part of helping them to grow and to discover God's call on their lives! [✠]

*Ms. Gillespie serves as National Youth Leader for The Brethren Church.*





## Announcing the 1999 Summer Ministries Participants

**W**HEN GOD CALLS, it's hard to ignore Him! That's what more than 60 youth and adults from our denomination are saying, as they prepare to give up their summer vacations to serve Him. Beginning in May, this year's **Summer Ministries** program will sweep the denomination like a storm. From District Crusaders and National Ministry Teams to Interns and Missions Teams, exciting things will happen this summer!

### Young Adult Ministry Interns

This summer eight young men and women will serve as Young Adult Ministry Interns in various churches and camps across the country. While spending their summer working at an assigned location, these young people will have an opportunity to explore God's call to vocational ministry.

**Mindy Van Duyne** (Park Street Church) and **Bryan Gribben** (Garber Church), both from Ashland, Ohio, will serve as interns at Ohio's Camp Bethany this summer. **Paula Strickland** (Garber) will intern at The Brethren Church National Office, working with youth ministries.

**Aaron Hollewell** (Lanark, Ill., Church) will serve as an intern for the Central District this summer. He will coordinate the work of other interns serving in the churches of the district, as well as organizing district youth events. **Jennifer Wilson** (Lanark) will serve in her home district as an intern at the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church in Waterloo, Iowa. **Peter Fink** (Lanark) will work as an intern at the Cerro Gordo, Ill., Brethren Church. **Brad Linboom** (Lanark) will intern at the Milledgeville, Ill., Brethren Church.

Back in Ohio, **Brandee Carson** (Mt. Zion Fellowship of the Brethren)

will serve at Camp George C. Forbes, an inner-city youth camp in Cleveland.

### National Ministry Teams

This summer will see the re-birth of National Ministry Teams, formerly known as National Crusader Teams. This year we will field two very talented teams—a camp/youth team and a drama/youth team.

The camp/youth team will be led by **Shannon Logan**, a member of the Masontown, Pa., Church. Team members will include **Jill Philip** (Berlin, Pa.), **Carrie Lingenfelter** (Brush Valley at Adrian, Pa.), and **Justin Nichols** (Cerro Gordo, Ill.). This team will help with camps in Pennsylvania, Southeastern District, Arizona, and Indiana. Team members will also help with youth programs and Bible schools at Trinity Brethren Church and at the Cerro Gordo Brethren Church.

**Rachel Pennington**, a member of the Oak Hill, W. Va., Church, will head the drama/youth team. Other team members will be **Tara Hubbard** (Lanark), **Emily Baker** (University Church, Ashland), **Heidi Bowers** (Sarasota, Fla.), **Sarah Fearon** (Canton Trinity), **Mark Lindberg** (University), and **Heidi Ricci** (University). This team will focus mainly on serving God through inspirational and challenging dramas and worship. The team will also serve at Bible schools, camps, and youth events at various churches.

### Pennsylvania District Crusaders

**Charity Kutch** (Brush Valley) will captain this young but excited team. The team also includes **Erika Davis** (Brush Valley) and **Billy Aikens** (Pleasant View). These three will serve as Bible school teachers at

Johnstown Third Brethren Church and at Cameron, W. Va. They will also serve as counselors at Pennsylvania Mini-Camp at Camp Peniel, and at the Pennsylvania District Youth Conference.

### Southeastern District Crusaders

The Southeastern District Crusader team will be led by veteran crusader **April Watkins** (Oak Hill). Joining April will be **Megan Wetzel** and **Nichole Clark**, both of Waterbrook Brethren Church, Edinburg, Va. This team will serve at the Southeastern District Junior camp and help with Bible schools at Gateway Brethren Fellowship (Hagerstown, Md.) and at the Maurertown, Va., Brethren Church.

### Ohio District Crusaders

The Ohio District will send out two teams of District Crusaders this summer. **Tim Hess**, a member of Park Street Brethren Church, will captain one of the teams. Joining Tim will be **Jonathan Gentle** (Park Street) and **Kevin Gibson**, (Louisville Brethren Bible).

**Erin Simon**, also a member of the Louisville Brethren Bible, will serve as captain of the second team. Serving with him will be **Susan Pritt** and **Emily Weidenhammer**, both from Park Street Church. Both Ohio teams will serve in various Bible schools and camps in the district.

### Mexico City team June 19-28

**Ed Strickland** (Ashland Garber) and **Greg Beam** (Elkhart, Ind., First Brethren) will serve as co-leaders of this exciting trip to Mexico City. Team members include **Tony Paul**, **Jason Bryandt**, **Jeff Estep**, and **Jesse**  
*(continued on next page)*

## Come, hear, and be blessed by these General Conference speakers

**WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS** for August 2-6 this year? If they don't include attending General Conference in Ashland, Ohio, you are going to miss out on a wonderful experience and a great time of spiritual blessing.

General Conference is a week of worship, inspiration, challenge, learning, praying, and sharing, with only a small amount of business. And you don't have to be a delegate to attend.

Four inspirational speakers who have been greatly used of God will bring the evening messages.

On Monday evening, **Dr. Jerry Johnston**, known as North



America's No. 1 speaker on high school and university campuses, will bring the message. Dr. Johnston has spoken to more than three million high school

and university students. But he doesn't speak just to young people; he has held numerous "Family Event" crusades across the United States. (Dr. Johnston will be accompanied by his teen-age son, Jeremy, a recognized speaker in his own right, who will speak to the youth on Tuesday morning.)

Tuesday evening's speaker, **Dr. Fred Finks**, needs no introduction to Brethren, having often spoken at Conference. Formerly a Brethren pastor, he has served since 1982 as president of Ashland Theological Seminary.



Under his direction ATS has become one of the leading evangelical seminaries in the U.S.

(Note: Sheri Rose Shepherd, who was originally scheduled to speak during the Tuesday evening service, was forced to cancel because of illness.)

**Dr. Clive Calver**, president of World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals, who made such an impression on Brethren at General Conference last year, will be back this August. He will speak during the Wednesday evening



missions-emphasis service. Before coming to World Relief in 1997, Calver served for 14 years as director general of the Evangelical Alliance of the United Kingdom. Calver has brought to World Relief the same vigorous leadership that guided the Evangelical Alliance to a period of unprecedented growth (500%). (Dr. Calver will be accompanied this year by his wife, Ruth, who will bring a message during the Missions Banquet on Wednesday.)

The blessings will continue to flow on Thursday evening, when **Dr. Martin Sanders** will be the speaker. Associate professor of pastoral theology at Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack, NY, Dr. Sanders has also been, since 1995, president of Global Leadership, a worldwide program for training and mentoring pastors. He lived up to his reputation as a gifted speaker when he spoke at the Spring Ministry Conference at Ashland Theological Seminary in 1998. [✚]



(continued from previous page)

**Davis**, all from Elkhart First Brethren. This team will work with Brethren missionaries Todd and Tracy Ruggles. They will pour a concrete floor for a home in a former garbage dump and also do street witnessing and evangelizing.

### Washington, D.C. team June 15-20

**Jason and Christy Carmean**, members of the Nappanee, Ind., First Brethren Church will head up this inner-city missions team. In Washington, D.C., the team will work with the homeless and with urban children and adults, help with work projects, and experience a different culture while still in the United States. Team members include **Billy Simmons, W. Patrick Johnson, Hillary Kupke, Leah Harmon, Roger Wells, Jeff Hertsel, Trina Andrews, Carol Hunn, Jon Hunn, and Kim Sobasky** (all from the Nappanee Church).

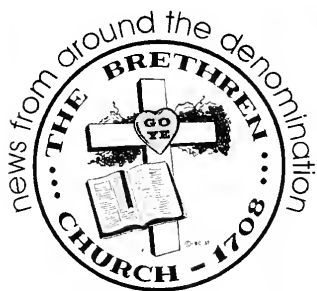
### Jamaica Team, July 5-19

**Jaime Gillespie** will lead a team of young women to Jamaica in July. They will help with a youth Bible school and also do street evangelism. Other team members are **Candice Nies** (Masontown, Pa.), **Emily Bowers** and **Kelly Swisher** (both from St. James, Md.), and **Diana Kemper** (Mt. Olive, McGaheysville, Va.).

### Gettysburg Team July 11-17

This team will spend a week in Gettysburg, Pa., helping with construction projects for families in poverty-stricken neighborhoods. **Christina Godefrin** (Sarasota, Fla.), and **Brian Burkett** (Fremont, Ohio) will lead this team. Joining them will be **David Huffman** (Mt. Olive), **Lori Miller, Elizabeth Esch, Becky Houghton, and Kimberly Bryant** (all from Elkhart First Brethren).

God has called these people to His service. He will use them this summer to touch the lives of many people. Please support their exciting ministries with your prayers and your finances! If you would like to serve as a prayer warrior or make a financial contribution to the Summer Ministries program, please contact **Jaime Gillespie** at the Brethren Church National Office. [✚]



## Briefly Noted



The Brethren Church of Stockton, California, has a new name: Carson Oaks Community Church. The new name reflects the subdivision in which the church is located, and the name-change is an effort to reach out to the neighborhood. Notes Pastor Gregg Moser, "We realize this alone will not make us grow, but it is one step of many we will be taking."

Rev. Moser adds, "Our legal status will not change. We are still Brethren Church of Stockton, but doing business as Carson Oaks Community. We intend to continue being a multicultural church and very much Brethren. We request the prayers of everyone, as we want to experience an awakening of the Spirit here in Stockton for the Brethren."

Sixty-five people made first-time decisions for Christ during an evangelistic campaign held in early April in Cozumel, Mexico, by Brethren pastor and evangelist **Rev. Daniel Rosales**. The services were held in an open-air arena with 500 people in attendance every night. While Rev. Rosales preached to the adults, his wife Kathy worked with youth. Daniel and Kathy's daughters also helped with the crusade by singing special music during the services.

**Dutchtown Brethren Church** near Warsaw, Ind., is celebrating the addition of some new members. On February 28, Pastor Jack Worth baptized two adults and six young people. Then on Sunday, March 7, Pastor Worth received 13 people into the membership of the church. [✎]



*Front section of the sanctuary of the Sarasota First Brethren Church building, showing the location of the new baptistry and the remodeled platform area.*

## Sarasota Church installs baptistry; remodels platform area of sanctuary; burns mortgage

**Sarasota, Fla.** — The Sarasota First Brethren Church has experienced several blessings of the Lord recently.

The first blessing was the completion last fall of a remodeling project on the platform area of the sanctuary. The remodeling project was precipitated by gifts in memory of former pastor Dr. J. D. Hamel, who went home to the Lord in February 1997. The memorial gifts were earmarked for a new baptistry for the church. (The former baptistry was located outside in a courtyard between the church buildings.)

The new baptistry was installed at the back of the platform area in the sanctuary, and the rest of the platform was lowered from four feet to two feet. The platform was also extended, so that there is now more space, even though some of the platform area was taken for the baptistry. With the lowering of the platform, it was also possible to install steps around three sides, providing much better access to the platform as well as a place to kneel and pray.

Sarasota First Brethren members Tom Paul and Sam Helmuth oversaw the project. Other members of the congregation also gave of their time.

The remodeling was completed and dedicated to the Lord on September 13, 1998, and the congregation has been enjoying it since then.

A second blessing occurred on March 6 of this year, when the Sarasota Brethren gathered for a cook-out and to burn their mortgage. In August 1989, Vanator Hall (the former sanctuary which had been remodeled into classroom space) was damaged by fire. After the fire, the congregation decided to remodel Vanator Hall and the educational building into one large facility.

Even with insurance money received from the fire, the remodeling necessitated a mortgage of more than \$230,000. Proceeds from the sale of the parsonage in 1997 paid about \$60,000 of this mortgage. Then in late 1998 and early 1999, the church received money from the estate of Dorothy Welch, which paid off the final amount.

After the grilled hamburgers and hot dogs were consumed, everyone went outside to sing songs of praise and to burn the mortgage. Edna Lampp, a close friend of the late Dorothy Welch, tossed the mortgage papers into the fire.

— reported by Pastor David Stone



## Briefly Noted



**Marcia Stoffer**, a member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio, was honored in April as Educator of the Year in the Ashland City Middle School. Mrs. Stoffer is an intervention specialist at the Middle School, teaching multi-handicapped students.



A 1974 graduate of Ashland University, she is married to Dr. Dale Stoffer, professor of historical theology at Ashland Theological Seminary. From 1980 to 1992 the Stoffers served the Smoky Row Brethren Church of Columbus, Ohio, which they began as a Home Mission congregation. In addition to her roles as pastor's wife and mother, Mrs. Stoffer also served the church as director of Christian education. The Stoffers have two children, Anne, a junior, and Paul, a freshman, at Ashland High School.

**Cornerstone Psychological Affiliates**, a Christian counseling agency founded and owned by **Dr. John Shultz**, a member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, was named Ashland's 1999 Small Business of the Year. Begun several years ago in Ashland, Cornerstone now also has offices in nearby Bellevue, Sandusky, and Wooster. It has 15 professional and seven support staff. Student interns in the counseling program at Ashland Theological Seminary also provide no-cost counseling through Cornerstone to those unable to afford services. Besides serving as president of Cornerstone, Dr. Shultz is professor of pastoral counseling at the seminary. [✚]

## Ohio Brethren struggle over what to do about churches that want to withdraw from the district

**Fremont, Ohio** — Ohio Brethren traveled to the northeastern part of the state on Saturday, April 24, for the annual Ohio District Conference, held at the Fremont Brethren Church. A total of 59 delegates (27 elders, 32 lay), a few guests, and several youth attended the meeting.

The conference opened with worship in song and welcomes by both host pastor Rev. Ed Miller and District Moderator J. Michael Drushal. Then Moderator-Elect Lynn Mercer spoke briefly about the importance of unity among Brethren. He urged pastors to promote unity by meeting together and by praying for the pastors and churches of the district.

He suggested that another means of unity is the denomination's leadership mentoring program. Four of the eight churches in this program are in Ohio. Rev. Mercer then gave the mentors and representatives of these four churches an opportunity to tell about the program.

Both the four mentors—Dr. Arden Gilmer, Dr. Lee Solomon, Dr. Dale Stoffer, and Dr. John Shultz—and representatives of the four churches they mentor—the Gretna, Vineyard Community, North Georgetown, and Smoky Row Brethren Churches respectively—spoke about the positive nature of the mentoring experience. The mentors noted that many good things are already being done, so the mentoring process is a way of finding ways to do them better. The church representatives expressed appreciation for the insights of the mentors and the fact that they don't tell the churches what to do, but help them discover for themselves what needs to be done.

During the business session that followed, the major item of discussion was how to respond to two churches in the district—Hillcrest

Brethren Church in Dayton and the Mt. Zion Fellowship of the Brethren near Cleveland—that want to withdraw from the district and The Brethren Church. After much discussion, delegates approved a motion setting up a commission to develop a policy that can be followed in this and other cases when churches seek to withdraw from the district.

Other business items included elections, district reports, and updates from denominational ministries. Officers for 1999–2000 are Rev. Lynn Mercer, moderator; Rev. Ed Miller, moderator-elect; Rev. Ralph Gibson, secretary; Joan Ronk, assistant secretary; Stan Gentle, treasurer; Rev. Bill Walk, assistant treasurer; and Dorman Ronk, statistician.

Rev. Ronald W. Waters presented a workshop on various means a church can use to improve its effectiveness. He highlighted the LIFE process (Living in Faithful Evangelism), New Life Ministries, and Natural Church Development.

The conference concluded with a brief worship service that included installation of officers and board and committee members. Next year's conference was set for April 15 at the Gratis Brethren Church.

— reported by Richard Winfield



**Berlin, Pa.** — Six new members—(1st row, l. to r.) William and Ellen Hay, Sandra Seifert, Rae Hoffman, (2nd row) Norman Menhorn, and Wayne Darr—were added to the diaconate of the Berlin Brethren Church on February 21. The service of ordination was conducted by Rev. Robert L. Hoffman (3rd row, l.), Pennsylvania District Board of Oversight representative, and Pastor Owen Preston.



The new Children's Park of the Brethren Mission in India showing the badminton court, "elephant slide," and swing set.

## Indian orphans enjoying new play equipment thanks to children at North Manchester Church

**North Manchester, Ind.** — The children in the two Brethren Mission orphanages in India have new playground equipment, thanks to a donation from children in the North Manchester First Brethren Church.

The money was offerings given by children in the Wednesday evening program called Club Riot. The children were challenged over a five-week period to bring in money from pennies to dollar bills. The first week they brought in pennies; the second week they brought nickels, the third week dimes, the fourth week quarters, and the fifth week dollar bills.

During the five weeks the children also learned about the orphanages in India. And a toy plane on a map was used to illustrate the progress of the project. On the first week the plane took off from Indiana. Each week it moved closer to India. Then on the final week, it landed in Rajahmundry.

The money was sent to Dr. K. Prasanth Kumar, director of Brethren Mission in India, with a request that it be used to purchase play equipment for the orphans. Along with the money, the North Manchester children sent candy, letters, and pictures of themselves.

The children were delighted when they later received a letter from Dr. Kumar with pictures showing the Children's Park their money had made possible. The park includes a badminton court and equipment, an "elephant slide" (a slide with the

figure of an elephant on the side), a swing set, and a seesaw. Some indoor games were also purchased. Rev. Kumar noted in his letter that the Children's Park is not only great for the orphanage children, it is also an outreach to the community.

This summer Joyce Immel, one of the Club Riot kids, will have an opportunity to actually see the playground. She will travel to India with her pastor, Rev. Kurt Stout, who will lead a team of 15 people on a three-week mission trip to India.

The Club Riot kids enjoyed this money-raising project so much that they decided to repeat it. This time they collected money for the Brethren Retreat Center at Shipshewana, Indiana. The money will be used to buy sports equipment to be used in the summer camps.

— reported by Janean Watson,  
Club Riot Coordinator

Thanks to a gift from a Brethren couple in the U.S. who wish to remain anonymous, the playground also has lights, and the orphanage compound has a wall in front of it to protect the children from traffic, stray dogs, and other dangers along the street. There was even enough money to buy each of the orphans a set of new clothes, to provide the children a special meal, and to purchase a large electric grinder and dough maker for the orphanages.

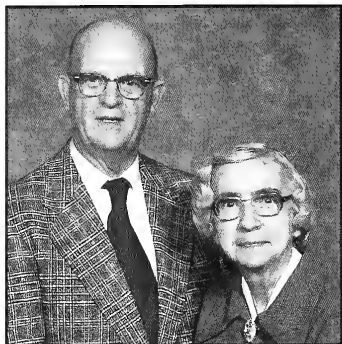


**Brethren Missionaries Dr. K. Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar** believe strongly in the importance of prayer. As a testimony to their belief, they recently funded the construction of a prayer tower at the Brethren Mission headquarters in Rajahmundry, India, using inheritance money they received from their parents.

The prayer tower was dedicated to the glory of God on January 10, 1999. This was the 31st wedding anniversary of the Kumars and also the first wedding anniversary of their son and daughter-in-law, Sudhir and Latha Kumar, who serve with Prasanth and Nirmala in the mission work in India.

The Prayer Tower is used around the clock as a place where Christians can come and pray for the safety of believers and for the needs of the people. The Kumars ask that Brethren in the United States join in praying for them and for all Christians in India, particularly during this time of persecution in that country.





## In Memory

**Rev. Smith F. Rose**, 83, a Brethren pastor for many years who also served for 12 years as Executive Secretary for The Brethren Church, died April 17 at Samaritan Hospital in Ashland, Ohio. His wife, **Florence Vincent Rose**, 89, died just four days later (April 21) at Brethren Care Village in Ashland.

Smith F. Rose was born December 7, 1915, in Haddenville, Pa., the son of Charles and Mary Rose. He attended Ashland College (B.A., 1939), Ashland Theological Seminary (B.Th., 1942), Concord College in W. Va. (teacher's certificate, 1949), and did additional course work at Hamma Divinity School. He was ordained a Brethren elder in 1941.

He served as pastor of Brethren congregations in Roann, Ind. (1942-45); Oak Hill, W. Va. (1945-51, also serving Gateway Brethren Church part of this time); West Alexandria, Ohio (1951-53); Howe, Ind. (Brighton Chapel, 1953-57); Bryan, Ohio (1957-67); and Fort Scott, Kans. (1980-84). During four of these pastorates he also taught school. He served interim pastorates at the Firestone Park (Akron), Massillon, and Garber (Ashland) Brethren churches.

He was General Conference moderator in 1957. Then from 1968 to 1980 he served as Executive Secretary for the Brethren denomination. He also served as moderator in the Indiana, Midwest, and Ohio Districts, and he sat on numerous district and denominational boards and committees, as well as the Board of Trustees for Ashland College and Theological Seminary.

Florence Margaret Rose was born

July 18, 1909, in Uniontown, Pa., the daughter of Edgar and Minerva Solomon Vincent. She was a 1927 graduate of Uniontown High School and attended Ashland College from 1935-36. She worked for several different insurance agencies, in the bursar's office at Ashland College, and later for the Brethren Church National Office.

The Roses were married June 8, 1939, and were the parents of two daughters, both of whom survive them—Mary Adele (Mrs. Eric) Maurer of Cleveland, Tenn., and Martha Louise (Mrs. Gerald) Warner of Colorado. Also surviving are two sons-in-law, five grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren.

A memorial service for both Rev. and Mrs. Rose was held May 1 at the Ashland Garber Brethren Church with Pastor Jim Rowsey officiating. Private burial was in Ashland County Memorial Park. Memorial contributions may be made to the Garber Brethren Church or Brethren Care Village in Ashland. [†]



**Winchester, Va.** — One of the major hassles for new Brethren U.S. Mission churches is setting up, tearing down, transporting, and storing their equipment each week, since most new congregations meet in schools or some other rented facility. These tasks have become a little easier for Grace Community Church, a new Brethren congregation in Winchester, Va., since acquiring an equipment van. The large van was donated by a friend of Grace Community member Craig Naff. Craig (shown with his wife Kathy) then completely rebuilt the van for the church's use. Now equipment for the church can be transported and stored with a lot less work.

— reported by Pastor Mike Woods

— reported by Pastor Mike Woods

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# The Brethren Evangelist



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A newsletter for Brethren people

June 1999

## Faithful Families and the Family of Faith

By Brenda Colijn

*This article is the conclusion of a much longer paper entitled "The Faith of Family and the Family of Faith," which Dr. Brenda Colijn presented at the Brethren World Assembly, held July 15-18, 1998, at Bridgewater College in Bridgewater, Va. Dr. Colijn, a member of the Smoky Row Brethren Church of Columbus, Ohio, is Assistant Professor of Theology at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN** to be faithful families and members of the family of faith? Many answers could be given to this question. I will venture four suggestions.

### A place of divine blessing

First, let us celebrate the biological family as a place in which to experience divine blessing. For this to

happen, our families must be centered on Jesus Christ and grounded in faith in Him. We should work to strengthen the faith life of our families and support families that are struggling.

Some of us can be models or mentors to people who have never known positive examples in their own families. We should encourage family devotional life and equip parents to teach their children the things of the faith. In a time of rapid change and disorientation, family spiritual traditions can provide an anchor as children venture out into the world. In the case of families divided by faith, we can reach out to unbelieving spouses, parents, or children. We can invite others into our families through adoption. We have not fulfilled God's purpose of blessing until we allow God to work through our families to bless other families.

### Recover family permeability

This brings me to my second point. Let us recover the permeability of the family. In response to cultural pressures, some parts of the American church have promoted the nuclear family as a haven or fortress that keeps out the values and stresses of the world. This means, however, that it also keeps out other people—not only other members of the household of God,

but guests and sojourners who might want to join that household.

The author of Hebrews urges believers to practice hospitality (13:2). Some of us are still good at that; others may be a bit rusty. We could invite someone for coffee or ask someone to live with us until he or she finds a job. We could care for one another's children. We could reach out to students, church visitors, singles, neighbors.

My husband and I both experienced at different times the blessing of living with another Christian family. Later when we were married

(continued on next page)



### Highlighting the family

The theme of this issue of the **EVANGELIST** is the family. This ties in with the denominational emphasis for June, which is on Family Life.

Four articles in this issue relate to the family. In the lead article, Dr. Brenda Colijn looks at the relationship between faithful families and the family of faith. In an article on page 4, Dr. Judy Allison suggests ways to encourage pastoral families. On page 5, Les and Leslie Parrott talk about marriage, the traditional foundation for the family. And in the final article of the four (on page 6), Cliff Schimmels gives some suggestions for surviving the children's teen-age years, often a trouble spot for the family.

### Inside this issue

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and had our own home, we opened it to other friends who lived with us while they were waiting to buy a house. Hospitality can be a significant ministry to other believers and a significant witness to unbelievers.

### Make the family of faith primary

Third, let us take the family of faith seriously as our primary family (see box below). This does not mean that every program of the church takes priority over family life. But it does mean that God's call on the family and its members comes first and orders all of life. It also means that we build a church family that shows the character of our Father and follows the standard of Jesus, our older brother—a faithful commu-

nity of mutual love and servanthood. Such a community would require an openness to people and a seriousness about commitment to Christ and to a biblical faith.

Much of the family context of faith was lost when worship moved out of homes and into church buildings. As Brethren, we have emphasized the importance of community. We need to maintain that emphasis, or, if necessary, to recover it.

This may be easier for some of us than for others because of our social context. If we do not have a social structure that provides community, we should create one. We should develop means of mutual support and accountability, such as Bible studies, care groups, prayer partners, men-

toring or discipling relationships, and worship cells. We should continue our tradition of mutual care and support.

We should also take seriously our responsibility to those without the protection and support of families. Are we providing care and inclusion for those who are in circumstances like the widow, orphan, and stranger of the Bible? We can be family to those who don't know what family is.

### Enlarge our family of faith

Fourth, let us enlarge our idea of the family of faith. In the first century, some of the people of God learned that the family of God was much bigger than they thought. God had a difficult time convincing them of that. To persuade them to let the Gentiles into the family, God had to give Peter a personal vision and strike Paul blind.

Where are our blind spots today? Who are our Gentiles? Are we too ethnic? Too rural? Too comfortable associating only with people like us? Too suspicious of other Christian traditions? What divisions is God calling us to overcome today? Can we yet say with Paul that the divisions of race, gender, and class listed in Galatians 3:28 have been overcome in the household of God? Are there people we have neglected who need to be ministered to—or to minister? Do we welcome singles as full members of the family? Do we value the contribution of widows or older persons?

We Brethren are supposed to know how to be family. If this is true, it means that we have something very important to share with a fragmented society. Let's not keep it to ourselves. [✠]

### The family of faith as primary

Dr. Colijn introduced the idea of the family of faith as the Christian's primary family earlier in her paper. Following are several quotations from the paper that explain and support this concept:

"In the New Testament, the family of faith becomes the primary family for believers." \* \* \*

"Jesus established this pattern with his own family. At age twelve in the Temple, he established his primary allegiance to his heavenly Father, although he continued to be obedient to his earthly parents (Lk. 2:49-51). . . . When he was informed that his mother and brothers were outside asking for him, Jesus replied, "'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking around at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother'" (Mk. 3:21, 31-35)." \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

"Jesus promises that his disciples who have left their families and property in order to follow him will be compensated for their loss. 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children . . .' (Mk. 10:29-30). . . . But how then do the disciples receive a hundredfold of brothers, sisters, mothers, and children in this age? They receive all these by having access to the relationships and resources of their new family, the household of faith." \* \* \*

"The family of faith now provides for one another as the surrogate of the biological family." \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

"The ideal is for the biological family and the family of faith to overlap as much as possible. For this to happen, the biological family must come together around a common allegiance to Jesus."

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### Pontius' Puddle

THE CHURCH HAS GROWN TOO AFFLUENT AND APATHETIC TOWARD THE POOR. THEREFORE I HAVE DECIDED NOT TO JOIN!



SO, INSTEAD YOU'LL CAST YOUR LOT WITH SECULAR SOCIETY WHERE GREED AND SELF-ABSORPTION ARE QUALITIES TO BE ADMIRABLE, NOT ADMONISHED. BRILLIANT THINKING, EINSTEIN!!



GULP I SEE YOUR POINT.

IN THE HANDS OF AN EXPERT, SARCASTIC CAN BE A QUITE EFFECTIVE FORM OF EVANGELISM.



© Joel Kautzman

# Billy's Faith

By Dan Lawson

*God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever present help in trouble.*

Psalm 46:1, NIV

I RECENTLY TRAVELED TO Argentina to do some teaching at the South American Theological Seminary. I returned to the U.S. with a memento of the trip that I hadn't counted on—a bacterial infection that resulted in a short stay at the Goshen General Hospital for dehydration. Instead of returning from this trip in a state of fasting and prayer, I came home in a state of fasting and purging.

My roommate at the hospital was an Amish man named Billy. I got to know him quite well because Billy occupied the bed nearest the bathroom, and my condition required frequent trips past the foot of his bed. On my first trip by, I was greeted with a big smile beaming from above a full Amish beard. He immediately said in a thick Dutch/Amish accent, "Hi! How ya doin'?" I learned his name, but that was about all I had time for under the circumstances.

## A sick horse

When I emerged from the bathroom, Billy spoke again. "Yeah boy, you must be sick! You sure made a lotta noise in der. You sound like my sick horse." (Note: hospital bathrooms are not built for acoustical privacy.) I told him that I felt like a sick horse and returned to my bed.

On subsequent trips past the foot of his bed, I learned that Billy has three children, two boys and a girl, and that the oldest is five. He was always very friendly regardless of how many trips I made. On each trip I was greeted with, "Hi! How ya doin'? You goin' back in der again?"

Around noon on my first day in the hospital a lunch tray was

brought in. I had no interest in my tray of broth and juice, but Billy greeted the server with a hardy, "Yeah boy, I'm hungry! I sure am glad to see you."

As is customary in all hospitals, as soon as our food was served the nurse always found it necessary to check our blood pressure and to take care of various other tasks that usually resulted in our much-desired hospital food getting cold. This day was no exception.

## Spreading the word

I was once again making a trip past the foot of Billy's bed while he was attempting to explain to the nurse that there was something wrong with his food. It didn't taste like the food his wife cooks. (Billy had amazing skills of observation!) But even in the middle of his conversation with the nurse, Billy still took time to say to me, "Hi! How ya doin'? You goin' back in der again?" Then he told the nurse, "Dis guy sounds like my sick horse. You ever hear a sick horse? Just stand here and listen and I'll show ya." I proceeded to do my best to fulfill Billy's expectations.

**"My roommate at the hospital was an Amish man named Billy. I got to know him quite well because Billy occupied the bed nearest the bathroom . . ."**

Billy issued that same decree later that evening to the entire Amish community, which—down to the last man, woman, and child—had decided to visit him. I noticed especially several small children as I made my way through the crowd in my not-so-modest hospital gown

for yet another of my frequent trips to the bathroom.

This time as I passed the foot of his bed, Billy introduced me to the entire family. And then he challenged them to see if I didn't "sound like a sick horse in there." Judging from the wide-eyed stares of the children when I emerged, I must have done a pretty good imitation. And considering the aroma that wafted from that small room, the children surely believed that there must indeed be a sick horse in there somewhere.

During his stay in the hospital, Billy spent every spare minute on the telephone. He knew enough about the telephone to realize that the people to whom he was talking were quite some distance away. For that reason he believed it was necessary to speak quite loudly. He spoke so loudly, in fact, that people often came in from the hall to see what all the yelling was about. It was only Billy talking to a relative, a friend, a coworker, or maybe just to the operator. Billy never met anyone who wasn't a friend.

## Prayer and faith

Billy was in the hospital because he had an irregular heart beat. The last time I saw him was when they took him to the intensive care unit. They were going to give him a general anesthetic and then attempt to shock his heart back into a normal rhythm.

Just before they came to get him, Billy pulled the curtain around his bed. Then he and his wife read scripture to each other—loudly enough to be sure that God heard them—and they prayed together. Billy didn't know it, but I prayed with him. And I was deeply moved by his faith.

As they wheeled Billy past the foot of my bed, he looked over at me one more time, grinned, and said, "Hi! How ya doin'? You goin' back in der again?" I said, "I'll be all right, Billy. In fact, I know we both will be all right." [✠]

*Dr. Lawson is senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. This is one in a series of articles.*

# How to have a happy pastoral family

By Judy Allison

IN MY WORK as a Christian psychologist, I often counsel with pastors and their families who are feeling burned out, used up, and unappreciated. Some leave their church at this point, others leave ministry altogether. Typically one of the major contributors to the discouragement and disillusionment of these pastors is a perceived lack of support and encouragement in the midst of a very demanding role.

At a recent interdenominational clergy conference, my husband and I listened as a pastor and his wife shared how they have to be careful about casually mentioning things they like or wish they had. It seems

that the members of the church jump on every opportunity to show appreciation to this pastor and his family. The couple told of a delivery truck arriving at their home with a new sofa; of their daughter finding a box on their porch containing a dress

had admired in a store; of books being left in the pastor's study after he shared his growing interest in a particular topic.

When asked what church they served, the pastor laughed and said, "Oh, we'll never tell. All of you would be lined up tomorrow to drop off your resumes!"

How refreshing to hear of a church that feels loved by its pastor and that returns that love with tangible expressions of appreciation! What would it take for your church to become a place where the pastor and the pastor's family feel so appreciated that they, like the pastor in this story, know that others would love to be in their shoes?

Some areas for you to consider might include ways to support and encourage your pastor; ways to encourage the pastor's family; and ways to encourage the ministry of your church. Following are some suggestions in each of these three areas. But these are only starting points to help you begin the process of thinking creatively about ways to express your love, appreciation, and commitment to your pastor and to your pastor's family.

## Ways to encourage your pastor

- Send your pastor a card or personal note expressing ways in which Sunday's sermon spoke to you personally. Be specific. A card or a note will carry a much greater impact than a comment on the way out the door on Sunday morning. Most pastors I know have a file in which they keep notes of appreciation. They visit this file on trying days.

- Make a habit of telling others what you appreciate about your pastor. Your concerns should be expressed directly to the pastor, but appreciation can be shared widely!

- Make a commitment to

pray daily for your pastor—and keep that commitment. Ask your pastor about specific needs for which you can pray.

- Treat your pastor to lunch. Then use that opportunity to get to know your pastor's heart.

- Recognize your pastor's need to spend time in personal spiritual formation, and encourage your pastor to spend that time. Give yourself bonus points for supporting your pastor's attendance at a spiritual formation retreat!

- Promote your pastor's physical well-being by providing a membership to the local YMCA. But first check this one out with your pastor to be sure that it would be appreciated and enjoyed.

## Ways to encourage your pastor's family

- Respect family times by not calling during their dinner hour, on the pastor's day off, or during special family occasions.

- Surprise them with a gift certificate to their favorite restaurant, and if the family has small children, make arrangements for a sitter they know and trust so that pastor and spouse can have a night out.

- Send a card of appreciation on the anniversary of the beginning of their ministry at your church. Include a comment telling what their ministry has meant to you.

- Have the same expectations of the pastor's spouse and children that you would have of any other family in the church.

- Let the pastor's children know that you love and appreciate their parents.

- Avoid making comparisons between the current pastor's family and the family of a former pastor.

- Surprise the family with a grocery shower to stock their pantry. This will be especially appreciated if you have paid attention to their particular likes and dislikes.

## Ways to encourage the ministry of the church

- Get to know your pastor's vision and heart for the ministry of your church. Think of ways you can help bring this vision to reality.

- Don't assume that odd jobs

(continued on next page)



*The perfect pastoral family is an unrealistic ideal. A congregation's expectation of the pastoral family should be the same as their expectations of any other family in the church.*



# Ten terrible reasons for getting married

By Les and Leslie Parrott

**A**SK MOST ENGAGED COUPLES why they are getting married and the answer is automatic: "Because we are in love." But you'll find the motivations for matrimony are far more complex. Some reasons for marrying improve your chances of success, while others work against it. What follows, in brief, are ten terrible reasons for marriage—reasons that researchers term "deficits."

1. **Love at first sight** seems like a romantic reason for marriage, but it's not a good predictor of marital success. Such feelings alone provide a weak foundation for a long-lasting relationship.

2. **Rebounding** also hinders the chances for marital longevity. People fall in love more easily when they're on the rebound. Research has found that people suffer low self-esteem after a breakup and are far less discriminating in choosing a

partner because they are trying to cope with their loss.

3. **Rebellion** leads some into a marital mismatch. Getting even with parents, for example, by marrying someone they do not like is always costly. As with marriage on the rebound, the wedding is a response to someone else rather than to one's partner.

4. **Loneliness** can drive a person into a hasty marriage. The problem with this motivation is that lonely people will end up lonely in marriage if the relationship doesn't have much more of a foundation to stand on.

5. **Obligation** sometimes substitutes for love when considering marriage. Some partners marry because one of them feels too guilty to break it off. A woman who marries a man because she believes her loyal devotion will help him quit drinking

and live up to his potential could be an example of this. Such marriages often don't work.

6. **Financial advancement** is a marriage motivator for some. Many young divorced mothers consider remarriage because they are exhausted from the struggle of supporting and caring for their small children. Men, too, can marry to advance their careers. The person going into marriage for economic reasons, however, is not a likely candidate for marrying well.

7. **Sexual attraction** and guilt over sexual involvement are popular but weak reasons for marriage. Sex is not a sufficient reason to marry and seldom leads to lifelong happiness. In fact, the sexual chemistry between two people often blinds the partners to important relational qualities.

8. **Premarital pregnancy** is a growing problematic reason for marriage, and a great deal of research has identified a consistent relationship between it and divorce. Ironically, teenage women who marry to avoid single parenthood often become single parents after all. It is difficult to be encouraging about young, pregnancy-inspired marriages, and some churches have been reluctant to sanction them unless the young couple is unusually mature.

9. **Escape** is perhaps the most damaging motivation for marriage. Some people marry to escape an unhappy home situation, but hoping a new person or a new environment will be better is a terrible basis for marriage. Usually the person who marries to escape will eventually "escape" one marriage for another and then another.

10. **Pressure** from parents, peers, and society pushes some singles into marriage. But this, too, is a poor reason for two people to pledge to live together for the rest of their lives.

## Companionship: the most important marriage motivator

We married, not out of a deficit, but out of a motivation that researchers say is the most important: **companionship**. To love and be loved by another person is perhaps the single most satisfying experi-

(continued on next page)

## A happy pastoral family

(continued from previous page)  
around the church are being done by someone else in the congregation. The someone else is probably the pastor.

- Make a commitment to your own spiritual growth. Keep the pastor informed of your progress.

- Determine to be an encourager rather than a critic.

- Let your pastor know what spiritual gifts you think you have, and ask how they could be used to bring the greatest benefit to the ministry of the church.

If you and others in your congregation begin putting these ideas into practice, you will be off to a great start toward becoming a church that is known for loving and encouraging its pastor. An ex-

cellent resource for additional practical ideas is *Support Your Local Pastor* by Wes Roberts.

Let's take seriously Paul's clear instruction to the church:

*And now, friends, we ask you to honor those leaders who work so hard for you, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you along in your obedience. Overwhelm them with appreciation and love!*

*Get along among yourselves, each of you doing your part.*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13,  
*The Message*

*Dr. Allison is Associate Professor of Pastoral Counseling at Ashland Theological Seminary and a licensed psychologist with Cornerstone Psychological Affiliates in Ashland, Ohio.*

# Breaking the silence barrier

By Cliff Schimmels

*Your teenager has just quit communicating with you. She's pleasant enough (at times), but you would like to have some report of what's going on in her life.*

AS THE WISE PHILOSOPHER once said, "What goes around comes around," and communicating with our children is just one of the experiences in the circle of life. Sometimes they talk so much that we think they will never shut up, and they recite details that we really don't care that much about hearing. But then they go through this period when any little peep would be welcome news.

## All guesswork

This may be one of the most frustrating factors in being a parent of an adolescent. When they were children, we thought we understood them because they talked enough to give us a bit of insight into their brain and soul. But while they are in adolescence, it's all guesswork—not one single clue as to what they might be thinking.

## Ten terrible reasons

(continued from page 5)

ence on earth. Many benefits of companionship can be enjoyed without marriage, but marriage provides the structure for experiencing this phenomenon most deeply.

Marriage provides a configuration, a form, an institution for two souls to walk together through life. Our prayer is that you and your partner are getting married for all the right reasons. [✚]

From the book **Getting Ready for the Wedding** by Les and Leslie Parrott (Zondervan, 1998). Article provided by the publisher and used by permission.

I'm not sure I totally understand this, but it may have something to do with their changing attitude toward us. At one time, they thought we were infallible and omniscient. "My daddy can whip your daddy." "My mommy is the smartest lady in the world and the most beautiful." Can you recall those glorious days of old? Wasn't it wonderful? We knew their perceptions weren't true, and we probably knew deep down inside that one day they would discover the truth, but there isn't any need to argue with the childlike appraisal.

But in adolescence, they change their mind. In fact, they take the opposite side. When they discover that we really aren't the smartest people in the world, they then surmise that we must be the dumbest people in the world, and we have to go through a few years of that false perception.

## Don't panic

Don't panic. This too is natural and temporal. If you don't follow through on some of your sudden impulses to annihilate them and you do let them grow up, they will someday come to a rather accurate appraisal of your talents and intelligence, and they will accept you and love you for what you really are.

In the meantime, we have to live with this attitude that we aren't worthy of their conversation. Maybe their minds are working so fast on a variety of topics that they don't have time to talk to us. Maybe they have picked up some real or imaginary hint that we don't care. Maybe

they are just so engrossed in themselves that it is hard for them to reach inside themselves and figure out enough of what they are thinking to share it with us.

## A guaranteed tip

But I have a tip. I offer this to you with almost a money-back guarantee. It never fails to work. If you really want to know what this girl is thinking, learn to eavesdrop. And you can do it legally too. Load her and a friend of hers in the back seat of the car; then you get in the front seat and drive them around town. I don't know why this is, but two teenagers in the back seat of a car assume that the adult in the front seat is deaf, so they chatter constantly. Almost everything that I know about middle-schoolers I learned while hauling them around in the car while I drove and listened. [✚]



Excerpt from **The Middle School Maze**, by Cliff Schimmels, Chariot Victor Publishing. A prolific author and speaker, Cliff Schimmels also teaches in the education department at Lee University in Tennessee. For more than 35 years he has either taught adolescents or taught those who will teach them. He and his wife Mary survived the middle-school years with their own three children, and now they sit back and grin as their grandchildren reenact many scenes from those years.

This article was provided by the publisher and used by permission.

God may send you some valuable gifts wrapped in unattractive paper. But do not worry about the wrappings, for you can be sure that inside He has hidden treasures of love, kindness and wisdom.

—A.B. Simpson

## 1999 General Conference Schedule

August 2-6 at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio

Theme: *Renew Our Church*



Jerry Johnston

### Monday, August 2

4:00 pm—New Delegate Briefing

6:30 pm—Opening Celebration:  
comments by  
Dr. Emanuel (Buzz)  
Sandberg; message by  
Dr. Jerry Johnston

8:30 pm—Ice Cream Social (reser-  
vation required)

2:30 pm—Workshop led by Dr.  
Richard Parrott

5:00 pm—Missions Banquet, with  
message by Mrs. Ruth  
Calver (reservation  
required)

7:00 pm—Worship Service, with  
message by Dr. Clive  
Calver



Clive Calver

### Tuesday, August 3

8:30 am—Business Session

11:00 am—Workshop led by Dr.  
Jerry Johnston

2:00 pm—Auxiliary Sessions

3:30 pm—Table Talks, and Work-  
shop led by Dr. Terry  
Wardle

7:00 pm—Worship Service, with  
message by Dr. Fred  
Finks



Fred Finks

### Wednesday, August 4

8:30 am—Brethren Ministry Wives Breakfast and  
Program (reservation required)

8:30 am—Workshop led by Dr. Dan Lawson

10:30 am—Workshop led by Brethren Missionaries

12:00 noon—Women's Luncheon (reservation  
required)

12:00 noon—Men's Luncheon (reservation required)

2:00 pm—Estes Park 2000 Preview

### Thursday, August 5

8:30 am—Business Session

11:00 am—Workshops led by Louise Waller and Dr.  
Terry Wardle

12:30 pm—World Relief Luncheon,  
with message by Bruce  
Sexton (reservation  
requested)

2:00 pm—Auxiliary Sessions

3:30 pm—Table Talks, and Work-  
shop led by Dr. Martin  
Sanders

7:00 pm—Worship Service, with  
message by Dr. Martin  
Sanders



Martin Sanders

### Friday, August 6

9:00 am—Concert of Prayer led by Dr. Jerry Flora

10:30 am—Closing Session, featuring Youth Con-  
vention report and closing remarks by Dr.  
Emanuel (Buzz) Sandberg

## General Conference Registration Information

(See registration form on page 9)

If you plan to attend General Conference and to make use of any of the services listed on the registration form on page 9 (housing, meals, special events, children's program, nursery), **please preregister by July 18.** Do not wait until you arrive to register.

### General instructions:

1. Room rates do not include sheets and towels. Bring your own or order a linen packet on the form. You will need to bring your own pillow.

2. Every bed used must be paid for, but children may sleep on the **floor** in their parents' room at no charge. Bring

a pad or sleeping bag. Single rooms have floor space for one child, doubles for two, triples for three. A limited number of triple rooms are available. Register early to get your preference.

3. Tickets for meals in the university cafeteria are usable any day, Tuesday through Friday. No refunds will be given, so order only as many tickets as you will need. Please purchase meal tickets now rather than at the door, so that the university will know approximately how many people to plan for.

4. The Women's Luncheon, World Relief Soup Luncheon, and Missions Banquet will be held in the Convoca-

tion Center; the Men's Picnic in Redwood Hall.

5. In addition to the program for older children, baby-sitting will be available for infants through preschoolers during morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. A schedule will be posted in the program book. If you plan to use the nursery, please indicate this on the registration form so the nursery can be adequately staffed. Activities for children 4 years old through 6th grade are also planned on Wednesday during the Missions Banquet.

### Other information

**Housing** — The housing desk, in the Convocation Center lobby, will be open Sunday evening from 6:00 to  
(continued on next page)

## 1999 BYIC Convention Schedule

August 2-6 at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio

Theme: *Twentyfour*\* (Col. 3:17)

\*(Living your life for God twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.)

### Monday, August 2

- 8:00 am—Check-in booth open
- 6:30 pm—General Session with Adult Conference, Dr. Jerry Johnston speaker
- 9:00 pm—Mixer and Social Athletics with Barry Jolliff

### Tuesday, August 3

- 7:30 am—National BYIC Council Meeting
- 9:00 am—Morning Worship, Jeremy Johnston, speaker
- 10:00 am—Jeremy Johnston Workshop
- 11:00 am—Dr. Jerry Johnston Workshop for youth leaders
- 1:30 pm—BYIC Informational Session and Caucus Meetings; National BYIC Steering Committee Nominations
- 7:30 pm—Youth Worship Service, speaker to be announced
- 9:30 pm—CPR Improvisation Comedians



Jeremy Johnston



Improvisation Comedians CPR

(continued from page 7)  
9:00; Monday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and after the evening program; and daily throughout the week.

**Camping** — Campsites are available at Ashland County Fairgrounds, 2042 Claremont Avenue in Ashland. No advance reservation is required.

**Credentials** — Delegate credentials should be submitted in person as early as possible during Conference week. Credentials will be received in the Convocation Center lobby Monday 2:00-6:00 p.m. and following the evening program; Tuesday through Thursday, 8:00-8:20 a.m.; and Tuesday and Wednesday, 6:30-7:00 p.m.

**Non-Delegates** — Non-delegates

are welcome at Conference. Please complete a reservation form. Then when you arrive in Ashland, check in at the credential table to receive a name badge and a Conference packet. A \$10.00 fee will be required.

**New-Attendees Briefing** — A briefing will be held at 4:00 p.m. Monday in the Convocation Center auditorium. Though planned specifically for first-time attendees, it is open to anyone. It will include a general orientation to Conference plus specific information about business sessions.

**Travel Subsidy** — If you travel more than 1,500 miles to attend Conference, pick up a travel subsidy form at the credential table when you arrive. [?]

### Wednesday, August 4

- 9:00 am—Morning Worship
- 11:00 am—Workshops for youth, Youth Advisor Training for adult sponsors
- 12:00 noon—Picnic and Fun Day on the quad
- 5:00 pm—Communion
- 8:30 pm—Summer Ministries Review

### Thursday, August 5

- 9:00 am—Morning Worship
- 11:00 am—Workshops for youth; Youth Advisor Training for adult sponsors
- 4:30 pm—Coffeehouse
- 7:00 pm—Evening Worship with Adult Conference, Dr. Martin Sanders speaker
- 10:00 pm—BUCK Concert
- 11:30 pm—Pizza Party

### Friday, August 6

- 9:00 am—Morning Worship and BYIC Closing Ceremony; Presentation of Awards to local youth groups
- 10:45 am—Closing with Adult Conference

**Note:** Adults may purchase CPR and BUCK concert tickets for \$5.00 from Jaime Gillespie at the National Office or at the housing desk during Conference. Proceeds from these performances will help fund the Summer Ministries Program. Adults are also welcome to join the youth for their picnic and fun day on Wednesday (\$11.50 for meal tickets) and the coffeehouse on Thursday (\$9.50 for tickets). Tickets must be ordered from Jaime Gillespie by July 21.

### Remember . . .

General Conference is for everyone, not just for delegates. Come to Conference and enjoy a week of worship, inspiration, learning, praying, and fellowship with other Brethren. You will grow in your faith and be challenged to greater commitment to Christ. It all adds up to a week of tremendous blessing!

**Plan now to attend!**



## General Conference Preview

See instructions on page 7.

Theme:

**"Renew Our Church"**

## 1999 General Conference

### Registration Form

Monday, August 2, through  
Friday, August 6, in Ashland, Ohio

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve only one room per form. **Youth** must register through the National BYIC if staying in the Youth Dorm; if staying with adults, use this form. **Note:** Registration with prepayment by July 18 results in guaranteed reservation.

Housing:	Rates**	Prepaid by July 18	Upon arrival	Housing costs calculation
Ashland University Dormitory	Single	\$18.00	\$22.00	No. nights x rate/night
Floor: Women's restroom _____ Men's _____	Double	26.00	33.00	_____ x _____ = \$ _____
Room type: Single _____ Double _____ Triple _____		36.00	43.00	Linen packet (2 sheets, 2 towels, 1 wash cloth)
Nights staying: S _____ M _____ T _____ W _____ Th _____				No. of packets x rate
Other preferences: _____				_____ x \$3.50 = \$ _____
Note: Above rates do not include linen. See linen rates at right.				Total Housing = \$ _____

### Meal Tickets

Meals are served in University cafeteria; tickets are usable any day—order as many tickets as you need for the week.

	No. tickets	
Breakfast	Adults _____	x \$4.36 = \$ _____
	Children under 12 _____	x \$2.18 = \$ _____
Lunch	Adults _____	x \$5.80 = \$ _____
	Children under 12 _____	x \$2.90 = \$ _____
Dinner	Adults _____	x \$7.25 = \$ _____
	Children under 12 _____	x \$3.63 = \$ _____

### Special Event Reservations

Reservations for the following events are required due to early deadlines. Tickets ordered after July 18 are subject to availability. No meal refunds after July 24.

Mon. 8:30 p.m. — Ice Cream Social	Adults _____	x \$3.00 = \$ _____
	Children under 12 _____	x \$1.50 = \$ _____
Wed. 8:30 a.m. — Brethren Ministry Wives	_____	x free = \$ _____
Continental Breakfast and Program		
Wed. 12:00 p.m. — Women's Luncheon	Adults _____	x \$8.00 = \$ _____
	Children under 6 _____	x \$4.00 = \$ _____
	Children under 3 _____	x free = \$ _____
Wed. 12:00 p.m. — Men's Picnic	_____	x \$8.00 = \$ _____
Wed. 5:00 p.m. — Missions Banquet	_____	x \$11.00 = \$ _____
Thur. 12:30 p.m. — World Relief Soup Luncheon	_____	(offering will be taken)

**Total meals and special events reservations enclosed = \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

### Summary Totals

Total Housing	= \$ _____
Total Meals and Special Events	= \$ _____
Total Children's Program	= \$ _____
Total Enclosed	= \$ _____

Make checks payable to:

### The Brethren Church

Send to:

General Conference Housing  
524 College Ave.  
Ashland, OH 44805

### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date rec. \_\_\_\_\_

Amount rec. \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_

### Children's Program (ages 4 years through completed 6th grade):

Tuesday and Thursday, 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Wednesday, 8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.;  
Friday, 8:30 a.m. to noon. Lunch provided Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

**Family Rate:** 1 child, \$46/week, \$15/day; 2 or more children, \$70/week, \$24/day.

Child's Name

Age/Grade  
Completed

Days (circle)

T W Th F \$ \_\_\_\_\_

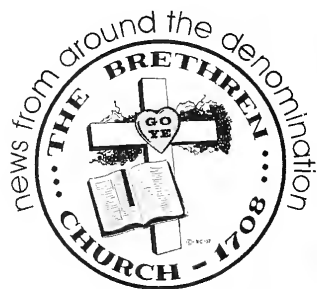
T W Th F \$ \_\_\_\_\_

T W Th F \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total for Children's Program \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Will you have small children in the  
nursery? If so, how many babies  
\_\_\_\_\_ and/or toddlers \_\_\_\_\_?

Mail this form, with payment in full, as soon as possible (and no later than July 18).  
Send to: General Conference Housing, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805



## Briefly Noted



Youth of the **Cross Keys Worship Center** near Port Republic, Va., participated in World Vision's 30-hour famine on February 26-27. After a "last meal" at a local pizza place, they went grocery shopping with one dollar in hand. This was one of several lessons about what it would be like to live in a Third World country. They then built cardboard houses in which to spend the night. And the next morning they went to the local dump and talked about what it would be like to live there. They also split into two groups and gathered canned goods for local food pantries. In all they gathered more than 200 cans of food. They also raised \$350 for World Vision.

In April, the youth hosted a community Easter party for the town of Grottoes, Va. In the town park, the youth hid more than 1,100 eggs—which the children of the town found in ten minutes! The youth played various games with the children, including pen the tail on the bunny, soft-boiled egg golf, and raw egg basketball. There were also two piñatas for the children to break, and cake and punch for refreshments. More than 100 people attended the Easter party. [F]



## Dream for new Family Life Center is realized by Waterloo's Hammond Ave. Brethren Church

**Waterloo, Iowa**—Members of the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church in Waterloo realized the fulfillment of a dream on Sunday, April 18, when they dedicated a beautiful new Family Life Center to the service of the Lord and to outreach in the Waterloo community.

The main part of the Center is a 76- by 43-foot multi-purpose area that can be used for recreational activities and fellowship events. The building also houses a kitchen, an enlarged foyer, an elevator, rest room, and a storage and mechanical room. A drive-through canopy at the entrance provides shelter to people as they enter the building.

Part of the old building was incorporated into the new, adding to the cost and the construction time. But the extra expense assured that the finished project was the fulfillment of a dream, and not the making of a nightmare. Total cost of the facility was about \$550,000.

Dreams of this building were already being dreamt on January 3, 1993, when Waterloo First Brethren Church and The City Church of the Brethren in Waterloo merged to become Hammond Avenue Brethren Church. Members of both congregations realized that the fellowship hall of the former City Church would not be adequate for the needs of the combined congregation.

Early in 1993 some steps were taken to bring the dream to fulfillment, but it soon became apparent that God was not ready for the church to embark on such an ambitious project. But the dream resurfaced in 1997, as the congregation struggled with inadequate space for fellowship activities, funeral meals, and wedding receptions.

A committee was formed, needs and wants were discussed, and architectural plans were drawn, tweaked, and approved. Then on June 7, 1998, ground was broken, and the next day construction began.

The congregation held its first outreach event in the new Family Life Center even before it was completed. Last December, on the weekend before Christmas, the congregation entertained nearly 500 people at a Fun Fair, a time of wholesome family entertainment. Each family who attended was given a brochure about the church and an invitation to the Christmas Eve service and to Sunday services.

Having realized one dream, the congregation now has another—to use this new facility for outreach for Christ into the community and to enjoy the extra space.

— reported by Pastor Ronald L. Waters



*The multi-purpose area in Hammond Avenue's Family Life Center.*



## Ashland University will host first annual update luncheon during General Conference

**Ashland, Ohio** — Brethren pastors, Ashland University and Theological Seminary alumni, parents of current and potential AU students, and friends of the university are invited to attend an Ashland University informational lunch during General Conference. The *free* lunch will be held Tuesday, August 3, at 12:30 p.m. in the Trustees Room of the AU Convocation Center.

Various Ashland University representatives will be at the luncheon—President G. William Benz, Provost Mary Ellen Drushal, other administrators, staff, Brethren faculty members, and Brethren AU students. They will present information about AU's exciting Christian ministries, campus happenings, financial aid, plans for the future, and much more. And those who attend as guests will have an opportunity to share their thoughts and to ask questions.

To register for the luncheon, complete the form below and return it by **July 18** to **Lanie Roberts, Office of Admission, Ashland University, Ashland, OH 44805**. (Questions? Call Lanie at 1-800-882-1548, ext. 5088.)

## Mayor of Albanian town praises churches for their relief ministry to Kosovar refugees

**Wheaton, Ill.** — The mayor of Korce in southern Albania recently praised the work the evangelical churches of his town have done in ministering to refugees from Kosovo.

"There is no way the state can cope [with this crisis]," said Korce Mayor Dhiomis Kotmilo to World Relief staff member Adele Horn. "If it weren't for the evangelical people, I don't know who would have helped. They have always been ready at all hours of the night to wait for the refugees to come. When 10,000 came, the evangelical churches were there."

The evangelical churches of Korce, with assistance from World Relief, operate a refugee transit center in Korce's sports arena, where 1,500 refugees at a time stay for several weeks before moving into newly built refugee camps near Korce. They also assist in as many as five smaller camps, in addition to providing aid to the 250 Albanian families housing refugees in their homes in Korce.

"The Christians have given more than material things," said Kotmilo. "They have given human feelings to the refugees, no matter their race, religion or where they come from. The thing that will stick out in my mind will be readiness, sacrifice, and human love for the refugees."

One of the Korce churches involved is comprised almost entirely of gypsies, the poorest of the poor in

Albania. "This is, in the most literal way, the most honorable sacrifice—the extremely poor giving everything they can to the extremely poor," said Clive Calver, president of World Relief.

World Relief is also helping Albanian churches in Tirana, Lusnje, and Erseka aid refugees. And in Macedonia, World Relief is helping churches provide up to 3,000 refugee children with a backpack containing soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, washcloth, paper, crayons, and a Bible storybook.

Here in the United States, World Relief has begun receiving an expected 2,000 of the 20,000 Kosovars accepted by the U.S. Government for resettlement in this country. World Relief is the third largest provider of refugee care in the U.S. and the only evangelical agency authorized by the U.S. department of State to resettle refugees. World Relief relies on church groups to aid the newly-arrived refugees with food, basic household goods, housing assistance, transportation, cultural mentoring, and English practice.

To help Kosovar refugees in Albania, Macedonia, or the U.S., send contributions to Missionary Ministries of The Brethren Church (524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805), designated for World Relief—Kosovar refugees. [✕]

### The Coles in retirement

"What is retirement? For us it's to continue to serve the Lord," say former Brethren pastor Rev. C. William (Bill) Cole and his wife Joanne. And they are doing just that.

After retiring from the pastorate in August 1997, the Coles moved to Bethlehem, Pa., where "our first aim was to find a small congregation where our presence would be helpful." (*There is no church of our denomination in that area.*) They soon found a God-loving group at a church just a mile from their apartment.

They immediately got involved—joined the choir, started a senior citizen group; Bill preached a couple of

times; and Joanne taught a Sunday school class and did nursery duty.

In addition, Bill likes to go to a diner, order a cup of coffee, and set his camera on the counter. When someone takes the bait and asks about the camera, Bill soon turns the conversation to spiritual concerns.

The Coles also hosted a foreign student for a weekend—a 50-year-old professor from China. They had the opportunity to talk to him about Jesus and to give him a Bible.

Bill was recently diagnosed with prostate cancer and is undergoing treatment. Joanne has ailments as well. But you can be sure that even these ills will not prevent the Coles from continuing to serve the Lord!

Yes, I will attend the Ashland University Update Luncheon on Tuesday, August 3, 1999.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_

Home church \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to AU \_\_\_\_\_

## In Memory

# The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 121, No. 7

A newsletter for Brethren people

July/August 1999

## ***Cristo Vive!*** Christ is alive in the church in Cuba

By James Hollinger

AT 3:00 a.m. on Friday, May 21, fifteen Christians from various denominations gathered at the Jefferson Brethren Church in Goshen, Indiana, to begin a journey to Cuba. Family members who had come to see us off joined us in a time of prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance and protection. Then the 15—including three of us from the Jefferson Brethren Church (Ray and Theresa Allison and I)—boarded vans for the first leg of our journey, a drive to the Chicago airport.

From Chicago we flew to Cancun, Mexico, where we joined approximately 300 other evangelical Christians from Mexico, Costa Rica, the United States, and Canada. We spent the rest of the day in Cancun receiving our final orientation. Then the following day (May 22) we made an early-morning flight to Cuba.

### **Our purpose**

Our purpose in going to Cuba was multi-faceted. We had learned that the Evangelical Church in Cuba had received permission to hold outdoor evangelistic services in stadiums and plazas. As Christians in Cuba prepared for these services, we wanted to demonstrate that brothers and sisters in Christ in other countries earnestly desired to provide encouragement and prayer for these special events.

This encouragement took on several forms. By carrying additional suitcases, we were able to take an unprecedented amount of humanitarian aid and medical supplies to our host church. The Cuban church



*Some of the more than 300 Christians who visited Cuba in May. Jim Hollinger is fifth from the left in the back row, and Theresa and Ray Allison are fourth and fifth from the right in the front row. Behind the group is the city of Havana.*

has a very sophisticated system for distributing this aid and medicine to people in need throughout the island. In addition to the supplies we took with us, humanitarian aid, literature, and medical supplies are being shipped to Cuba by sea.

But in addition to providing material aid, we were able to provide personal encouragement to Cuban believers by visiting a number of their local church meetings on Sunday. We, in turn, were encouraged during these visits by the spirit of revival that is alive in the Cuban church.

The church visit of which I was a part turned out to be very interesting. Due to a mix-up in our understanding about the starting time, the service had been in session for four hours before we got there! As we arrived, we were blessed to see the church building filled to capacity and overflowing into the street. Peo-

ple were also on the roof of the church building, on the roofs of adjacent buildings, and in homes across the street. Closed-circuit television sets and loudspeakers on the outside of the church building and on the roofs of surrounding buildings made it possible for the people outside to participate in the service.

Following our arrival, the congregation extended the service for at

*(continued on next page)*

### **Inside this issue**

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**The Women's Outlook Newsletter**  
is in the center of this issue



The Christian celebration on June 20 in Revolution Plaza in Havana. The person circled at the left of the picture, near the platform, is Fidel Castro.

least another hour so that we could participate. We witnessed some very fervent singing and praying. We also had the opportunity to share a few modest gifts with the church body. They, in turn, shared their love and their enthusiastic spirit of worship in an unforgettable manner.

Most of the evangelical churches we had contact with in Cuba have house congregations that meet during the week. We were able to visit several of these house churches, where we gave our testimony, expressed our thanks, and shared prayer requests. After these rich times of testimony and prayer, we also presented some modest personal gifts and gift bags that had been prepared for the house churches.

### Two-way blessings

As is usually the case in Christian ministry, the blessings flowed both ways during our time in Cuba. In addition to the blessings we imparted, we were blessed by being in the

presence of some very warm and loving brothers and sisters in Christ. We developed some friendships with interpreters. And we sensed the Holy Spirit at work. We spent several hours in prayer, conforming our attitudes to God's will for the week, rather than to our preconceived ideas of how the schedule should work. On the more mundane level, we were blessed by the opportunity to view some of the Spanish architecture in Old Havana and to see some of God's beautiful handwork in the Cuban countryside.

We sensed the excitement of the evangelical churches as they looked forward to the unprecedented opportunity to share Christ in open evangelistic services in the plazas and stadiums of Cuba during May and June. These programs were also broadcast on national television—a first in Cuba. The Cuban believers told us about the months and years of prayer that had preceded this opportunity to share the gospel. They

expressed their expectation of what God and the Holy Spirit were about to do through these unprecedented opportunities for ministry.

It is our prayer that this new wave of openness to the gospel will continue in Cuba. It is also our prayer that nothing we did during our stay in Cuba will be detrimental to those who might come after us. We would solicit your prayers for Cuba as well, and for the safe arrival of the medical and humanitarian aid and literature that are in transit to Cuba.

### Postscript

As if the blessings of a week in Cuba were not enough, I had the unexpected opportunity to return to Cuba with a small group of people for the final Christian celebration on June 20 in Revolution Plaza in Havana. A few days prior to this event, Fidel Castro announced his intentions to attend, and he encouraged the Cuban people to attend as well. Many miraculous events occurred that made it possible for us to attend, and when we arrived in Cuba, many more miraculous events took place that confirmed that it was God's will for us to be part of this unprecedented event.

On the day of the celebration, we got up well before dawn and hurried to Revolution Plaza. When we got there, we discovered that thousands of people had already arrived and were singing and shouting *Cristo Vive!* Indeed, Christ is alive in the hearts and lives of His children in Cuba. What a blessing to be able to witness first hand the power of the Holy Spirit among His people! [✠]

Dr. Hollinger is a surgeon in Goshen, Indiana. He is a member of the Jefferson Brethren Church and of the Missionary Ministries Council of The Brethren Church.

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### Pontius' Puddle



# Everyday Faith

By Dan Lawson

**H**AVE YOU EVER WONDERED about all those great characters mentioned in the Bible? In Hebrews chapter 11, for example, we read about the great heroes of faith: "By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain did. . . . By faith Noah . . . built an ark to save his family. . . . By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went . . ."

As we read through this chapter, we must confess that we are inspired by the accounts of these individuals. But we may also find ourselves thinking, "It was easy for these people to live by faith, for they were hand-picked by God." We often see these individuals as great people of God, but just as often we tend to think of ourselves as being no one special. Deep down we don't see ourselves as on an equal level with these great people of faith.

## Ordinary people

As I have studied these great people of faith in the Bible, I have discovered something that all of them had in common: they were all ordinary people. They sinned. They made mistakes. And every one of them lacked the ability to perform great acts of faith without divine intervention. They weren't great men and women of themselves. God made them great because of their faith.

Go back and read Hebrews chapter 11 again and you will see one simple phrase that clues us in on this fact. It is the phrase "by faith." The author of Hebrews tells us that each of these persons was only able to do these great things for God "by faith."

I believe there was one other thing that all these great men and women of the Bible had in com-

mon, and that is that they lived their faith daily. It wasn't just faith for the moment that made them great servants of God. Rather, it was a faith that was lived out in every aspect of their lives. This is the kind of faith that can move mountains and that can make ordinary people like you and me into extraordinary people of God.

## Mountain-moving faith

I'm sure that you have heard the story about the church in the mountains that had grown to the point that an addition was needed to the building. When the addition was completed, the congregation discovered that the parking lot was too small. So the pastor called the church members together and reminded them of what Jesus had said: *I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, "Move from here to there" and it will move* (Matt. 17:20, NIV). So the congregation prayed and had faith.



Not long after the prayer meeting someone from a construction company called the church and informed the pastor that the company needed fill dirt for a project it was working on. Permission was given for the company to take dirt near the church building. So work-

ers came, hauled away the dirt, made a level parking lot, and even paved it free of charge for the church. The moral of this story is: Faith really can move mountains!

Even after hearing such modern-day accounts, many of us still tend to think that we are incapable of such great acts of faith. But that is not true. Each of us can have great faith as well.

**"We need to make sure that Christ is at the center of our lives and that we have a daily relationship with Him."**

## Jesus perfects our faith

Let's go back to Hebrews and look at 12:2—*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith* . . . . Notice the wording of this verse. Jesus is not just the author of our faith; He is also the **perfecter** of our faith. What this means is that as we go through life, for as long as we keep Jesus as our focus, He will perfect our faith. He is not only the source of our faith, but He makes that faith stronger every day.

The key is for us to *keep our eyes fixed on Jesus*. We need to make sure that Christ is at the center of our lives and that we have a daily relationship with Him. As we live out our faith in Him daily, our faith gets stronger.

Just as a runner sets his eyes on the finish line and runs the race with that goal in mind, we, too, need to set our eyes on Jesus and on the goal of having a daily relationship with Him. When we do this, the everyday cares and struggles of life will fall into proper perspective. And one day our names, too, will be added to that great hall of faith. [✞]

*Dr. Lawson is senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. This is one in a series of articles in which he applies Bible truths to our personal lives.*



# A Kid for the Teacher

By Chantal Logan

*Chantal Logan and her husband Mark are members of The Brethren Church who are serving the Lord and living out their Christian faith in Djibouti, Africa. The following article illustrates the challenges and opportunities they encounter as they live and work in a cross-cultural situation in today's world.*

ANY STUDENT will tell you that teachers belong to a different species from the rest of humanity. They will readily admit that teachers belong to a human species—after all, teachers look like humans. But the all-important question to students is not how human teachers may be, but whether they belong to a good species or a bad species; a species worthy of trust and respect or a species subject to suspicion. And the answer? Well, that largely depends on which part of the world you live in and where you happen to be from.

## Respect and suspicion

In many parts of Africa, foreign teachers were once regarded with both respect and suspicion. With respect because they possessed knowledge that gave their countries the

power to colonize (a euphemism for conquer and subdue). With suspicion (especially in Muslim countries) because teachers were either missionaries who taught and practiced a different religion, or else civil servants who professed no religion at all.

Now, however, the time of colonization has come and gone, and Western knowledge holds no secrets for most people in Africa. Even the religious issue isn't so big. What everybody cares about now is getting the best possible education. In the country where I live and teach, the most popular private school is Catholic, even though 95 percent of the people are Muslim.

## A vanishing species

As for me, I teach in a public junior high school. I belong to a vanishing species, since I am only one of three Europeans\* in a school with more than 40 teachers. If I lived in the United States, I probably would be put on the endangered species list of some non-profit organization.

I probably do not need their protection, however, for at school, all of us teachers—foreigners and nationals alike—are under the close scrutiny of a large body of students. Some 2,000 of them—47 in the average class—giggle and whisper and confer as we teachers walk by. Or they unashamedly stare at us through the windows of the teachers' lounge, especially when we are filling out report cards.

Nevertheless, my being European makes me twice as interesting as the non-European teachers, since I am the first white teacher many of the students have ever had. Yet contrary to tradition, their attitude to-

\*In Africa, people of European ancestry are generally referred to as Europeans, even if they are citizens of the United States, Canada, Australia, etc. But Mrs. Logan is also a European in the more specific sense, having been born in France.

wards me is neither one of respect nor of suspicion. It is one of just plain curiosity.

It is not that they have never seen white people before. They can watch them on television and see them in town. But the students I teach live in the poorest district of town, and many of them have only recently arrived from a nomadic life in the desert. They have only been able to watch Europeans from a distance. For them, Europeans are people who drive by in big four-wheel-drive vehicles who look down at them through the safety of their tinted

***"Any way you look at it, I belong to a different and a privileged species. And by looking at me, the students have a chance to get a closer picture of what that all can mean."***

windows. Above all, Europeans are people who possess two things that they can only hope for, two things that they believe education can give them: power and money.

Even those of us who work for a small mission cannot fool ourselves into thinking that we do not possess those two things. Simply by virtue of the passport we carry, we can be airlifted at a moment's notice out of any kind of trouble, leaving everyone else to fend for themselves. Any way you look at it, I belong to a different and a privileged species. And by looking at me, the students have a chance to get a closer picture of what that all can mean.

## Natural curiosity

I have noticed two situations when the students seem to watch me particularly closely. One is when I get on or off of the bus. The other is when I am interacting with their "home-grown" teachers.

Their curiosity in the first case is easy to understand. Very few Europeans ride the bus, especially on this side of town. So besides wondering why I take the bus, they wonder if I really know how. Do I know how much it costs or how to get the bus to stop where I want to get off? (Teachers, especially foreign teach-



Mark and Chantal Logan





*Students at Mrs. Logan's school arriving for a new school day.*

ers, are not known to be knowledgeable about real life—that is, about life outside of the classroom.)

Actually, I have come to find out that their attitude is really one of concern. When I step onto the bus, I enter their territory. Being worthy sons and daughters of nomads, they know that it is their responsibility to make sure that this stranger (who happens to be a woman) receives protection—which in today's world means not getting ripped off by some unscrupulous bus driver.

As to why they watch me so closely when I am with teachers from their country, I am not quite sure. I have the feeling that it is because they want to know how I relate to people who are both my kind and not my kind. Is it possible that I belong to the same species as their teachers even though I am of a different culture and race? Do I talk to them the same way I would talk to European teachers? And the biggest question of all: Do I really see them as equals? Although I am very much aware of their questions, the conclusions they draw from their observations remain a mystery to me.

### **An unusual invitation**

One of my students, a young man of 16, must have drawn the conclusion that it was safe to invite me to his home. Students occasionally visit a teacher's residence to ask for help or to discuss their grades. But it is rare for a teacher to be invited to a student's home. For professional reasons, teachers do not encourage the practice. It could be considered

"apple polishing" or as a way for a student to seek a favor. But being as curious about my students as they are about me, I did not want to miss this opportunity to get to know a student better. Nor did I want to take the risk of offending him. So for these reasons, I agreed to the visit. But I went with a lot of questions in the back of my mind.

### **A normal(?) guest**

The visit itself was quite uneventful. I could not help but notice the contrast between the shy and self-conscious behavior of the student's family towards me with the naturalness and directness of the student. He almost treated me like a normal person. His attitude seemed to say, "Yes, I know that she is a teacher and that she is European, but so what? I know her. Can't I just talk to her the way I would talk to anybody else? Can't I just treat her like a normal guest?"

Did he really treat me like a normal guest? Well, I thought he did. But when I was ready to leave, I found out that either I wasn't a normal guest or else his understanding of a normal guest was very different from mine. As I prepared to depart, he surprised me by telling me to wait a few more minutes because, as he said with a secretive smile, I could not leave without a present and the present was not quite ready. I was touched and intrigued by his sentiment. But I certainly wasn't prepared when his mother returned a few moments later with a live baby goat in her arms!

Now it was my turn to act puzzled and embarrassed! To this day I wonder how my reaction was interpreted. It was only after I recovered from my surprise that I saw the look of delight on my student's face at the idea of presenting me with such a special gift. I hope that I expressed enough appreciation for the honor I was shown.

At that moment, however, all I could think about was how I could carry a live baby goat home with me on the bus. Especially me, a person who doesn't even like to pet a well-domesticated cat! My student, noticing my disarray (teachers are definitely helpless when it comes to dealing with real-life situations), and being the gracious host that he is, volunteered to ride with me. So on the two buses it took to get back to my house, he rode with me, holding on his lap a bleating baby goat!

To his credit, when I returned to school the next day, this student did not act any differently towards me than he had before the visit. In fact, he almost made a point of keeping his distance and of showing he was not expecting any special treatment. Since then he has come to my house to visit, and he continues to stop by occasionally, even though he is no longer my student. Yet I still wonder why I was the recipient of such a precious gift. And I continue to wonder who I am to him and to the other students. I know that I am definitively regarded as *different*, but why and how? Is it just because I am a teacher and a European? Or is there more to it than that?

### **The scary part**

The students are aware that I belong to a faith different from theirs. It is a challenge for me to know that I am watched so closely. The species I think I belong to is called Christian, but all they know is that I am different. Ultimately they are the ones who will decide where I belong.

It is always others who classify us, whether we like it or not. Because the students are aware that I belong to a different faith, it is they who will decide, from their evaluation of what they observe in me, whether the faith I hold is worthy of their consideration. And that, of course, is the scary part. [¶]

# Exploring Our Heritage

By Robert Keplinger

**G**ERMANTOWN, Pennsylvania, now part of Philadelphia, is the North American home of Brethren in the United States. The Brethren movement, which began in central Germany in 1708, soon encountered severe persecution. This caused a group of Brethren to leave for America in 1719. They found their way to Germantown, where they were welcomed by the German-speaking community there.

## A church is born

On Christmas Day 1723, the Brethren in Germantown gathered at Wissahickon Creek for the first baptism in North America. Afterward, they met in a home to observe the Love Feast of footwashing, fellowship meal, and communion (bread and cup). Thus the Germantown church was born.

Peter Becker, a weaver, led the new church. In 1729, Alexander Mack, Sr., the first pastor of the Brethren in Germany, arrived in Germantown with a large number of followers. Mack became a leader in the church at Germantown. Following Mack's death in 1735, his son, Alexander Mack, Jr., and Christopher Sauer (Sower), II, became leaders among the Brethren at Germantown.

For four decades the Germantown Brethren worshiped in homes. They then moved their worship services into the Pettikoffer house that stood at the front of the church property. Another part of the house was used as a residence for widows.

The first meetinghouse was erected in 1770. The main floor was used for worship services, the loft for overnight guests, and the basement for Love-Feast preparations.

Church membership at Germantown declined during most of the 19th century, but in 1892 a period of renewal began under pastor Wilbur B. Stover. In 1896-97, a large sanctuary was constructed adjacent to

the original meeting house. Then in 1915 an extension was added for Sunday school classrooms.

Growth continued under the leadership of Pastor M.C. Swigart, who served the congregation from 1906 to 1939. By the 1930s membership had risen to 459. But beginning in the 1940s, numbers declined. In 1964 the congregation merged with a neighboring church. Then in 1965 Ron and Ila Lutz began a new outreach effort to the community.

## A new beginning

In 1989 Richard Keyermaten from Ghana became pastor, spurring Germantown's re-establishment as a congregation. The church now carries on a full-orbed Christian ministry. This includes worship services, Sunday school classes, music activities, women's groups, day care for preschool children, revival meetings, social occasions, food and clothing pantry, care of the homeless, ministry to drug abusers, and family counseling.

Since 1964, the General Board of the Church of the Brethren has

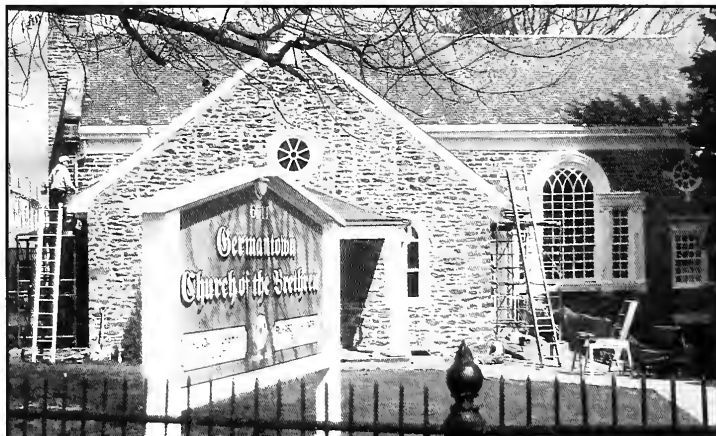
owned the Germantown building and property. Since 1982 the upkeep of the building and grounds has been the responsibility of the Germantown Trust. This trust is made up of representatives from all six Brethren groups in the United States.

Recent renovations have included refurbishing the first floor of the original building into a museum of Brethren history and Brethren artifacts; putting a new roof on the meeting house; and preserving numerous graves in the cemetery, which is adjacent to the present buildings. A current project is to make handicapped-accessible rest rooms in the main church building.

The cemetery was used as a burial site for victims of a yellow fever epidemic in 1793. It has more than 1,000 graves. Among the notables buried there are Alexander Mack, Sr., his son Alexander Mack, Jr., and preacher-writer Harriet Livermore, who was immortalized in J.G. Whittier's poem *Snowbound*. Also interred there are 30 elders.

If you have never visited the Germantown property in Philadelphia or have not done so in recent years, I encourage you to do so. It will be well worth your time to see what we share as Brethren here in North America. [✝]

*Rev. Keplinger, a retired Brethren pastor living in Ashland, Ohio, is The Brethren Church's representative on the Germantown Trust.*



*The Germantown Church building—getting a new roof. The original structure—which has been remodeled various times—is in the foreground. The larger section behind was the result of additions made in 1896 and 1915.*

## Countdown to General Conference

**T**HE 1999 General Conference is fast approaching, but it is not too late to send in your reservation if you have not already done so. (A reservation form was included in the June EVANGELIST, page 9.) Conference promises to be a great week of worship, inspiration, fellowship, and blessing, as Brethren come together to ask God to *Renew Our Church*.

The schedule for Conference week was included in last month's issue of the EVANGELIST (page 7), and the evening speakers were highlighted in the May issue (page 8). Two speakers who have not been highlighted are Ruth Calver, who will speak at the Missions Banquet on Wednesday evening, and Bruce Sexton, who



*Clive and Ruth Calver with their four children.*

will present a message during the World Relief luncheon on Thursday.

**Ruth Calver.** Not often do we have both a husband and wife speak at General Conference, but this will

be the case when Mrs. Ruth Calver speaks at the Missions Banquet on Wednesday evening and her husband, Dr. Clive Calver, President of World Relief Corporation, speaks during the worship service to follow.

Those who heard Dr. Calver last year are looking forward to hearing him again. But Mrs. Calver also has a reputation as someone you will want to hear. Before coming to the U.S. with her husband in 1997, she was a regular speaker in churches, women's groups, and conferences throughout the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Calver is also an experienced writer and editor. But she characterizes herself as a "practitioner," someone who gets involved in the lives of the down and out. In England she reached out to London theater troupes, AIDS victims, drug addicts, and abandoned youth.

She is also the mother of four children. Suzy, the youngest, is with her parents in the U.S., but their two sons, Kris and Gavin, remained in school in England when the Calvers came to the U.S. And their oldest child, Vicky, works with street children in India.

**Bruce Sexton.** As Regional Director of Church Relations for World Relief's Mid-Atlantic Region, Bruce



*Bruce Sexton*

Sexton has provided valuable service to The Brethren Church. He keeps the National Office informed of crisis situations around the world and of World Relief's response.

He helps to arrange for World Relief speakers and provides displays and literature for Conference.

Rev. Sexton brings both ministry and management experience to his work with World Relief. He served for ten years as a pastor with the Christian & Missionary Alliance. He has also served in various leadership capacities on local boards of Christian organizations. But most important, he has a heart for the work of World Relief, and he will share that heart when he speaks at the World Relief luncheon. [✠]

## General Conference Offerings

Each evening at General Conference an offering is taken for some special project. In past years, some people who were unable to attend Conference have expressed an interest in contributing to these offerings. Therefore, here is information about this year's projects.

**Monday's offering** will be used to hold regional workshops to provide training for youth leaders. At these workshops youth leaders will have an opportunity to receive training, learn about the latest resources, and network with other leaders. The aim of these workshops is to empower Brethren youth leaders to reach a new generation of youth with God's Word.

**Tuesday's offering** will go toward scholarships for Brethren churches participating in the Church Renewal and Redevelopment process at Ashland Theological Seminary. Your gifts will provide both written materials for the process and subsidies for churches that would otherwise not be able to participate.

**Wednesday's offering** will be used to provide scholarships for

Brethren students in South America attending the South American Theological Seminary and also to purchase books for the seminary library as it works toward accreditation. Offerings may be designated for either scholarships or books. Undesignated gifts will be equally divided between the two.

**Thursday's offering** will provide start-up funds for a mentors' network for Brethren Impact Church Planting. This network will develop training, networking, and continuing education opportunities to provide Brethren church-planting teams with encouragement and in-the-field oversight from effective Brethren mentors.

Your gifts for these offerings may be sent to General Conference with the delegation from your church, or they may be mailed directly to General Conference Offerings, The Brethren Church, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. Make checks payable to The Brethren Church and indicate the designation in the memo section of the check, or attach a note explaining how the gift is to be designated. [✠]

## Ashland University: Providing a Unique Balance

By Michael Gleason

AMIE, a high school senior from southern Ohio, was looking for a college or university where she could complete a four-year degree as well as one that would provide her opportunities to grow as a Christian. Ashland University was on her list, and after a search around the state, she moved Ashland to the top.

Many factors influenced Amie's decision to attend Ashland University this fall. Among them are Ashland's course offerings, student/faculty ratio, reputation, campus appearance, and most importantly for her, the availability of Christian programming. In her search she discovered that Ashland, in many ways, is unique.

All schools have their strengths, but one of Ashland's is the balance we provide for the Christian student to develop in both mind and heart. Allow me to share with you a few of the Christian program highlights that helped Amie and her family decide that Ashland is indeed their university of choice.

### Navigator Ministries

I mentioned to Amie that because the collegiate division of The Navigators' organization has selected Ashland University as a training campus for future campus ministers, four graduates from various universities (two men and two women) will come to Ashland in the fall of 1999 for a two-year period. This will provide additional female staff to mentor her and other young women one-on-one or through small-group Bible studies (a strong priority for Navigators). Each trainee will also work alongside our three existing Navigator staff persons (Joe Maggeet, Nathan Harrison, and Jack Miller).

### Meal and More

Students like Amie, who are involved in their local church, are encouraged when they learn that every other "Meal and More" chapel service hosts a student speaker. This past spring, for example, Brad

Linboom from the Central District presented an excellent meditation that was well-received by faculty, staff, and students in attendance.

### Fellowship of Christian Athletes

This organization enjoyed an exceptional year, with near-capacity crowds filling the lower chapel for weekly meetings. Its ministries have reached deep within the cross country, football, men's and women's basketball, baseball, and wrestling teams. Efforts to make inroads into other sports continue as well.

Weekly meetings provide strong biblical teaching. FCA staff members and student "huddle leaders"—like recent graduate Keith Pepsny of the Ohio District—work hard to follow up new students and to facilitate Bible studies. Recently four students affiliated with FCA, who made new or renewed commitments to Christ, were baptized.

### HOPE Fellowship

This organization, which is now in the process of renewing its mission, is concentrating on ways to more

aggressively expand its membership next fall. Current HOPE Fellowship officer Rachel Pennington (South-eastern district), recent graduate HOPE officer Chris Rufener (Ohio District), along with Emily Baker (Ohio District) and Tara Hubbard

*Serving as a HOPE Fellowship officer at Ashland University was truly a blessing from the Lord. Through the encourage-*



*ment and training of campus staff, I not only grew more intimate with God, I also learned how to share the gift of Christ through evangelism and discipleship. All that I've learned will be carried with me as I enter the ministry next year with The Navigators. Pray that God alone will be glorified through my work.*  
— Chris Rufener, 1999 AU graduate

(Central District), served alongside a host of additional student volunteers to provide strong leadership to the various HOPE ministries. Emily recently returned from the HOPE Fellowship international missions trip to Belize, Central America. Amie showed particular interest in the various programs and ministries of HOPE. In fact, she already has Wednesday night HOPE meetings on her fall calendar!

### University Church

When Amie's family asked about local church opportunities, they were pleased to hear of the many nearby congregations as well as our on-campus University Church. I mentioned that in June, John Allison began serving alongside our departmental staff as the University Church's first full-time pastor.

### Brethren Student Outreach

As was the case last year, each Brethren student coming to the university this fall will receive a personal invitation to meet with me, as well as with other Brethren people from the university and the commu-



*As an FCA Huddle Leader, I have been blessed with tremendous fellowship as well as incredible training from the Religious Life staff. I've also had the opportunity to serve as co-worship-leader at University Church. Through these experiences and others at Ashland University, the Lord has allowed me to grow by leaps and bounds. Now, as I go into campus ministry with The Navigators at the University of Maryland, I rejoice in the way God has used my time at Ashland to shape me.*  
— Keith Pepsny, 1999 AU graduate

nity. It is our collective desire to help Brethren students assimilate to the Ashland community.

## Adventure Club

Although not drawn to outdoor adventure herself, Amie was interested to hear that recent Adventure Club trips took students backpacking in New Mexico and white-water rafting in West Virginia. This group



*I have received a heavy burden for the AU campus for next year. Instead of going to other places, my vision and focus for the year are to find ways and seek God in reaching the campus for Jesus Christ through the Collegian, WRDL radio station, HOPE Fellowship, and discipleship. Please pray for the campus, for salvation, and a revival.*

— Rachel Pennington, AU junior

enjoyed an excellent year and continues to be one of the strongest outreach arms of our department.

## Christian Concert

With her interest in music, Amie was pleased to learn that the Campus Activities Board, HOPE Fellowship, and various student groups co-sponsor an annual winter Christian concert. Numerous community youth groups and several Brethren congregations in North Central Ohio support the event, which provides a valuable Christian outreach for the university.

## Religion Club

This small but dedicated group maintains a strong commitment to its bi-monthly luncheon meetings. At these meetings, speakers discuss a wide variety of topics that are of interest to students who are majoring or minoring in religion.

## Convocations

In March we enjoyed a strong attendance at our Easter Convocation, which featured well-known speaker

## Update Luncheon to be Part of General Conference

You are invited to attend the first annual Ashland University Update Luncheon during the 1999 General Conference. It will be held on Tuesday, August 3, at 12:30 p.m. in the Trustees Room on the upper floor of the AU Convocation Center.

If you are a Brethren pastor, an alumnus or alumna of Ashland University or Ashland Theological Seminary, the parent of a current AU

student, the parent of a high school student, or just an interested friend of the University, please join us for this free, informal lunch/discussion.

Information will be shared regarding the University's exciting Christian ministries, the latest campus happenings, financial aid, plans for the future, and much more. Please bring your thoughts, comments, questions, and appetite!

To register for the luncheon, please call Lanie Roberts at 1-800-882-1548, ext. 5088. [✠]

Dr. Rickey Bolden, pastor of Southeast Christian Fellowship. Dr. Bolden remained on campus and spoke to both FCA and HOPE Fellowship. Amie's family was pleased to learn how the tradition of campus-wide convocations, which has been all but lost at many church-related institutions, still remains a strong emphasis at Ashland University.

**An emphasis on both mind and heart**—this is a balance that for Amie

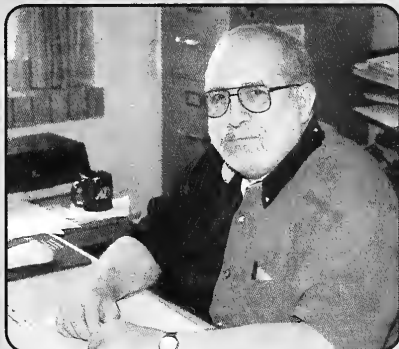
and her family tipped the scales in favor of Ashland University. If you are still searching for your "university of choice," let me encourage you to search for institutions that will furnish you with this unique balance. And if you do, I imagine that you may find, as Amie did, that Ashland University will top your list! [✠]

*Dr. Gleason is Director of Religious Life at Ashland University.*

*My grandfathers (George Drushal and Albert Whitted, both of whom were Brethren pastors) both graduated from this school, as did my parents, my wife, and I. When God presented me with the opportunity 15 years ago to return here to teach, it was a dream come true. I had always wanted to try my hand at college teaching, and to do it at an institution that is so much a part of my family was an exciting prospect. Since then our children have graduated from AU (fourth generation). All of us were well-prepared for our personal lives of ministry for our Lord by attending Ashland University.*

*Beyond my obvious emotional ties to the institution, I can honestly report that Ashland University is a great place to be. The students and faculty here are top-notch people. We have an active Christian presence on campus, including HOPE Fellowship, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the Adventure Club, and the University Church. Each of these ministries is active on campus and in our community. Ashland is a place where you can grow in your Christian faith and receive a quality education. Brethren students could ask for no more in looking for a place to spend four of the best years of their lives than Ashland University. I would welcome you to visit our campus, talk to our students and faculty, and see for yourselves what a great place Ashland can be. I would be excited to see you personally or correspond with you (mdrushal@ashland.edu or 311 Patterson Hall, Ashland University, 44805) or chat with you on the phone (419-289-5225).*

— Dr. J. Michael Drushal, Associate Professor, Management Information Systems



## **Ashland University is committed to attracting more Brethren students . . . and you can help!**

The VISTA (Volunteers in Service to Ashland) program is expanding to include a section especially for Brethren alumni, parents, and friends. The main goal of this group is to refer high school students to Ashland University.

Through interaction with friends and neighbors, you may come into daily contact with Brethren students who are potential Ashland University students. Talk to them about Ashland. Then complete a referral card (like the one at the right) and send it to the Office of Admission. We will take it from there by providing the potential student with literature and invitations to visit our campus.

It's easy, and it's a great way to help Ashland University and The Brethren Church!

If you would like more information on the VISTA program, please contact Richard Billman, VISTA Coordinator. Call him at 1-800-882-1548, ext. 5081; or e-mail him at [rbillman@ashland.edu](mailto:rbillman@ashland.edu).

To submit the name of a student, fill out the form at the right, clip it out, and mail it to:

**Admission Office, Ashland University,  
401 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805-9981**

### **ASHLAND UNIVERSITY STUDENT REFERRAL CARD** (Please print)

Student's name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Name of high school \_\_\_\_\_

Date of graduation \_\_\_\_\_

Intended college major(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Extracurricular activities student wishes to pursue \_\_\_\_\_

Athletics \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please send me more referral cards.

BRE-EV

## **1999-2000 Visit Days at Ashland University**

### **FALL FLING September 25, 1999**

High school and college transfer students and their families are invited to a casual, fun-filled day on the Ashland University campus. Interact with AU students, faculty, and administrators; tour the campus; and cheer the AU Eagle football team to victory! (\$5 per person; children under 10 free)

### **AU SCHOLAR TEST**

**Saturday, November 3, 1999  
Saturday, February 19, 2000**

An excellent opportunity for academically-talented high school seniors to compete for top-level financial assistance. Those with the top 23 scores on each test date receive scholarships ranging from \$12,000 to \$1,000 per year. The day includes a continental breakfast, lunch, and a campus tour, plus valuable sessions for parents. (\$15 registration fee for the test-taker and two guests; additional guests \$5)

### **CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES DAY Friday, January 28, 2000**

This is a special day for high school juniors, seniors, and transfer students interested in Christian activities at AU. Beginning in the late afternoon, activities will include interaction with students and administrators from our Center for Religious Life, dinner with AU students, and an exciting Christian concert. You will be hosted overnight by AU students who are active in our Christian organizations, allowing you to participate in the Winter Open House program on Saturday (see next description). (\$5 per person for the Christian Activities Day; \$10 for the Christian Activities Day and the Winter Open House)

### **WINTER OPEN HOUSE Saturday, January 29, 2000**

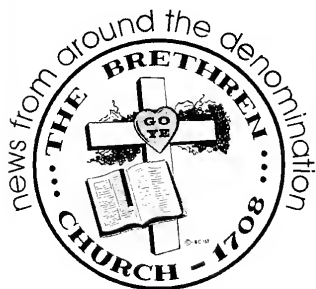
Open to high school and college transfer students and their families, this day provides an opportunity to

learn more about the academic opportunities at Ashland as you mingle with the professors. You will also gain the student's perspective as you are guided on a campus tour. And you will experience our award-winning food court firsthand. Admission and financial aid information will also be presented. Exciting NCAA Division II athletic action will round out the day, as the Eagle wrestlers and swimmers both have home meets. (\$5 per person; children under 10 free)

### **SPRING OPEN HOUSE Saturday, April 8, 2000**

For high school students just starting your college search, this program will focus on the how-to's of the college selection process. From financial aid to extracurricular activities, you will receive valuable hints, informative handouts, and super ideas to help you and your parents successfully prepare for your college years. Interact with AU faculty members and students, tour the campus, and enjoy dining in Ashland's award-winning food court. (\$5 per person; children under 10 free) [✂]





### In Memory

**Edith L. (Polk) Rodkey**, 85, national president of the Women's Missionary Society from 1952 to 1967, died June 27 at a care home in Rossville, Ind. Born June 24, 1914, near Galveston, Ind., she was a 1931 graduate of Young America High School and a graduate of Kokomo Music College. She also attended Taylor University. She taught piano lessons to scores of young people over a 40-year period and was the founder of the Burlington Music Club.

She was married for more than 60 years (since August 14, 1938) to Russell Rodkey, who survives her. Three months after their wedding, she joined the Burlington, Ind., First Brethren Church, and for the rest of her life she was a treasured, faithful, loving, and exemplary member of that congregation. Her funeral service was held at the Neptune Funeral Home in Burlington, with First Brethren pastor Rev. Dennis Sigle officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to the National Women's Missionary Society. [✠]

## Brethren Pastor Dan Lawson to become new Director of Congregational Ministries

**Ashland, Ohio** — Dr. Dan Lawson has accepted a call to become Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church, according to an announcement by Dr. Emanuel Sandberg, Executive Director of the denomination.

For the past 15 years, Dr. Lawson has served as a pastor in The Brethren Church, most recently (1995-present) as Senior Pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. Prior to that he served the Oakville, Ind., First Brethren Church from 1988-95 and the Valley Brethren Church (Jones Mills, Pa.) from 1984-88.

Raised in a Christian home in Wabash, Ind., Lawson accepted Christ as his savior at an early age and became a member of the College Corner Brethren Church. Following high school he entered Purdue University and began studying aeronautical engineering with the goal of becoming an astronaut.

But according to Lawson, God had greater plans for him, and "by nothing short of a miracle" He called Dan to Christian ministry during his sophomore year at Purdue. Lawson transferred to Ashland University, where he majored in religion



*Dr. Dan Lawson*

and public speaking and minored in radio/TV broadcasting, receiving a B.A. degree in 1980. He continued his studies at Ashland Theological Seminary, receiving a Master of Divinity degree in 1984. While pastoring the Valley Brethren Church, he did additional work at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and received

a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1989.

In addition to his pastoral work, Lawson has a radio and tape ministry, which he calls "Petros Ministries." His weekly radio program, "Upon This Rock," is aired on WHME, LeSea Broadcasting, of South Bend, Ind. Cassette copies of this program are offered on a call-in basis, and numerous requests have been received.

Lawson also has a strong interest in spiritual gifts and did his doctoral dissertation on spiritual gifts as a means of developing lay ministries in the local church. Out of this he has developed a lay-ministry recruitment program for local churches called "Living Sacrifice." He has presented Living Sacrifice as a one-day workshop to churches in Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

He has written a number of articles for THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, including his current monthly series, in which he applies Bible truths to our daily lives. He has also written two books, for which he is seeking publishers.

In 1979 Lawson married Lynne Hirt of North Olmsted, Ohio. They are parents of two children, Alesia (15) and David (8).

In announcing the call of Lawson to this position, Dr. Sandberg said, "I am looking forward to working closely with Dan. I expect his empowering leadership to be important to the work of the Kingdom for decades to come." Lawson will begin serving as Director of Congregational Ministries in September. [✠]

### 1999 Brethren ATS graduates

**Ashland, Ohio** — The following Brethren received degrees May 29 from Ashland Theological Seminary.

**Bradley A. Hardesty** — Doctor of Ministry degree. An elder and former pastor in The Brethren Church, Dr. Hardesty current serves as associate pastor of First Christian Church in South Bend, Ind.

**Ronald E. Miller, Sr.** — Master of Divinity degree. From the Linwood, Md., Brethren Church, Miller is now the church-planting pastor of Living Waters Community (Brethren) Church in Mansfield, Ohio.

### Arnold L. and Joyce A. Owens

— Master of Divinity degrees. Members of the Pleasant View Brethren Church, Arnold is seeking a Brethren pastorate and Joyce will serve with him.

**Brandelan S. Worthington** — M.A. in Christian Ed. From Mansfield, Ohio, she is overseeing the Christian education program at Living Waters Community Church.

**Gregory B. Miller** — M.A. in Christian Ministry. From Galveston, Ill., he is a part of the core team of Living Waters Community Church in Mansfield. [✠]



## Trinity Pastor James R. Black surprised on 70th birthday

**Canton, Ohio** — Members of the Trinity Brethren Church in North Canton, Ohio, had a surprise birthday party and dinner on June 6 for their pastor, Rev. James R. Black. The occasion was Pastor Black's 70th birthday.

Centerpiece of the birthday celebration was a giant-sized cake with a picture in the frosting of Pastor Black's hero—John Wayne. Inscribed on the cake were the words "Happy Birthday Pilgrim" and the reference "Hebrews 11:13." A good crowd of Trinity Brethren were on hand to help their pastor celebrate.

Pastor Jim has been in Christian ministry for 42 years, including his 14 years with the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church as Director of Home Missions (3½ years) and then as Executive Director. Shortly after retiring from the Missionary Board in 1995, he began serving Trinity Church, and, according to publicity chair Wanda Kurlinski, he "is still going strong!"

"He and Shirley have been a real blessing to Trinity Brethren," Mrs. Kurlinski continues, "and we appreciate them so much. We're so happy to have Shirley worshipping with us again [after her illness]. We wish them both well and know that Pastor Jim still has a lot of great sermons left in him!"



*Above, Pastor Jim Black with his cake; right, the Blacks enjoying the celebration.*

## Brad Whitehead installed as Senior Pastor May 16 at Goshen First Brethren Church

**Goshen, Ind.** — Brad Whitehead was installed Sunday, May 16, as Senior Pastor of the Goshen First Brethren Church. Goshen interim pastor Dr. Charles Munson gave the message for the service; District Elder Gene Eckerley presented the pastoral charge; and Moderator Ken Metzger received Pastor Whitehead and his family into the church.



Pastor Whitehead has been serving at Goshen First Brethren since 1996, when he started an outreach ministry to a local mobile home park and a contemporary Sunday morning worship service as a means of attracting these young families to the church. In May 1997 the Goshen congregation called him to serve full time as Associate Pastor of Youth and Outreach, and he continued in that position until this spring, when the congregation approved a recommendation from the Pastoral Board that he become Senior Pastor.

Pastor Whitehead fills the position that became vacant in July 1998, when Rev. Donald Rowser retired after 14 years as Senior Pastor of the Goshen Church. From July 1998 until May of this year, Dr.

Charles Munson served as interim pastor. He will continue to assist the church by preaching occasionally and by teaching Wednesday night Bible studies.

In addition to his service at

the Goshen Church, Pastor Whitehead has been a popular speaker at district and national youth conferences. He is married, and he and his wife Tina have three children, Jessica, Nicholas, and Jennifer. [3]

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# The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 121, No. 8

A newsletter for Brethren people

September 1999

## General Conference: Will it make a difference?

**A**NOTHER General Conference has come and gone. According to those who attended, it was a very good Conference. The speakers were all inspirational. The worship services were a blessing. And the times of Brethren fellowship were great.

But more important, people were challenged. Hearts were changed. Commitments and recommitments were made. Renewal took place.

But will this Conference make a difference? Only if there is follow through. Only if commitments made during the week are kept. Only if new ideas that were presented are



implemented. Only if the inspiration received is translated into living for Christ more faithfully and serving Him more diligently.

On the pages that follow are articles about the Conference. They give only a taste of the good things that took place, for it's impossible to cover a week full of activities in 12 pages. But they present enough of the week to remind you who attended of the blessings you received and to spur you to follow through. And for those who did not attend, I hope that enough of the inspiration and challenge are conveyed that you, too, will be blessed and renewed, and that this Conference will make a difference in your life as well. [†]

— R. Winfield, editor

## General Conference as Seen Through New Eyes

**W**HAT does General Conference look like to someone who attends for the first time? Specifically, what would the 1999 General Conference look like to someone who had never attended Conference before?

To find out, I wrote down several questions about attending Conference. Then on Monday afternoon of Conference week, I went to the briefing for first-time attenders to find someone who would be willing to jot down his or her answers to those questions during the week.

I actually found a couple—a man and a wife—who were willing to tell about their Conference experience. Not only were they making their first visit to Conference, but so were their children, who attended the BYIC Convention and the Children's Program.

The couple have been Brethren Church members for several years and both are active in their local church. They came to General Conference to see first hand what is going on in the Brethren denomination nationwide and around the world.

They also came with a desire to meet and fellowship with other Brethren.

They said that they were pleasantly surprised by the Conference experience—with new surprises every day. One special surprise they mentioned was that the business sessions were so short and so efficiently run.

One of the high points of the week for this couple occurred the very first night—the opening night worship and praise. “The Holy Spirit was present, and God knew the Brethren were worshiping Him,” they wrote. “With about 1,000 adults and youth, and the excellent Park Street Praise Band, it was a high point.”

They also listed as high points the message by Clive Calver (see pp. 6 & 7) and “the excellent workshops by Dan Lawson, Jerry Johnston, Terry Wardle, Richard Parrott, and Martin Sanders.” All of these workshops, they said, “were especially stimulating and should have lasting positive results.”

Many of us, after trying unsuccessfully to share with someone else

the blessings of an experience, have thought or perhaps said, “You had to be there!” That seemed to be the sentiment of this couple, as they summed up their experience.

“This was an excellent Conference,” they said. “It is impossible to give the Conference any justice by trying to describe it with words. We would urge all Brethren to attend General Conference as often as possible. . . . There was something for everyone, and a great deal for most.”

And what about this family—do they plan to attend again? “Lord willing, we’ll see you at Estes in 2000,” they said. [†]

— R. Winfield

### Inside this issue

This entire issue of the EVANGELIST is given over to coverage of General Conference, held August 2-6. Regular features, including news from around the denomination, will return next month.

**The Women's Outlook Newsletter** is in the center of this issue.

## Monday Evening Worship:

# Renew Our Youth

Reported by David Stone

**RENEW OUR YOUTH** was the theme of the first worship service of General Conference. This kickoff event was exciting, especially because it was a joint session—with both adults and youth attending.

The worship service began at 6:30 p.m. Monday night with a welcome by Moderator John Shultz and music by the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church praise band. This 15-member band did a wonderful job of leading the Conference congregation in worship the entire evening with a mix of praise songs that added up to over an hour of music.

Dr. Emanuel (Buzz) Sandberg, Executive Director of The Brethren Church, commented on encouraging signs in the church. He mentioned that the church has turned the corner on church planting, with many new works up and running. Training for church planters and for church renewal has also been developed and emphasized.

The church is also recruiting more pastors. He said that more Brethren seminary students are studying for pastoral ministry now than were graduated in the last five years. Other positive signs include increased giving to the denomination, doubling of World Relief giving last year, and the good spirit in the church. Dr. Sandberg then introduced the daily themes of the Conference.

Our National Youth Leader Jaime

Gillespie presided during the receiving of the evening offering. She said that the purpose of the offering was to help pay for regional workshops to provide training for youth leaders. After referring to some of the recent tragedies involving teenagers, she gave this challenge to the Conference congregation: "It's time for us as the church to take back the youth of our country." A total of \$1,956 was collected to help equip our youth leaders for that purpose.

The National Youth Drama Team performed a skit that encouraged church leaders to allow their youth to minister to the church. The skit portrayed the frustration of a youth member who felt called to minister but was unable to find a leader in the church who would allow her to do so.

Dr. Jerry Johnston was the featured speaker for the evening. He has a national reputation, speaking especially in public schools and youth rallies all over the country. He began by speaking personally about his own past as a child of a traveling father and an alcoholic mother. He became involved in drugs to the extent that he decided to commit suicide. After attending camp, however,

he gave his life to Jesus Christ, and Jesus transformed his life. In time Jesus changed the lives of his parents as well. After this personal story, Mr. Johnston described the eight greatest steps we can take to save our children.

**1. Start listening with your heart.** Parents should be listening to their children earnestly. Dr. Johnston pointed out that the moment a



Dr. Buzz Sandberg talks about encouraging signs in The Brethren Church.

child is ready to talk is usually not a convenient time for the parent, but the parent should set other things aside. Non-verbal cues are important indicators as well. He warned, "If I'm not speaking to my children about real issues, someone else will."

**2. Be discerning.** Even if parents listen, they may be misled by their child. Parents need to be discerning about what is going on with and around a child. He noted, for example,

that 80 to 90 percent of the sexual abuse of children is committed by someone the family knows and trusts.

**3. Exhibit, exude, and teach with love.** Dr. Johnston gave a literal translation of 1 Corinthians 13:5 — "True love never keeps the books on all the wrong done to it." Good parents need to



A youth member (Emily Baker, l.) becomes increasingly frustrated as one more church leader (Heidi Bowers) is unwilling to give her an opportunity to minister to the church — in a drama presented by the National Youth Drama Team.

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be forgiving parents, because we know for sure that our children are going to mess up and do the wrong thing at times. Parents must exhibit the *agape* love that the Bible teaches.

**4. Embrace them.** Hugging and holding are important elements of the critical bond between parents (grandparents, etc.) and their children. There are now 14 million teenagers who grew up as latchkey kids. One theory about the high suicide rate among today's teenagers is that they never bonded with their parents.

**5. Monitor your teenager's friends.** Mr. Johnston reminded the Conference: "We become like those we hang out with." He recounted a ride home from a conference during which his son, Jeremy, mentioned his desire to start STORM groups. STORM is an acronym for Strong Teenagers On a Rescue Mission. The concept is for mature Christian teenagers to influence others for good.

**6. Model the message.** Children will do what their parents or

guardians do, not what they say. Parents should live in the way they hope their children will live.



*Dr. Jerry Johnston presents eight steps to save our children.*

**7. Be honest with your discipline.** Mr. Johnston repeated twice, "Every child needs the security of a parent who cares enough to disci-

pline them." He presented discipline as a positive element that children need for their own well-being.

**8. Pray with them.** Dr. Johnston said that he asked his daughter for a commitment that she would not date a boy until he came to pray with her father. He affirmed the truth of the old saying, "A family that prays together stays together."

Dr. Johnston mentioned how wonderful it would be if the nation would choose leaders who were good examples to our youth. Then he concluded with the observation, "The hope of America is not the White House; it's the house of God."

An altar call was given for those who wanted to surrender their lives to Jesus for the first time, those who were making a commitment to change their home life, and those who were sensing a call to full-time service. The area in front of the platform was crowded to overflowing with people who came forward in response. [†]

*Rev. Stone is pastor of the Sarasota, Fla., First Brethren Church.*



*Dr. Jerry Johnston introduces his teenage son, Jeremy, to the Conference. Jeremy, who heads a ministry called STORM, an acronym for Strong Teenagers On a Rescue Mission, spoke to the BYIC Convention on Tuesday morning of Conference. He was well-received by the youth.*

In addition to his Monday evening message, Dr. Jerry Johnston presented a workshop on Tuesday morning entitled "Renew Our Children Through Youth Ministry." In his preliminary remarks, he stated that for young people "love" is spelled "t-i-m-e." He went on to say that every adult has the opportunity to mentor some young person for Christ. But we need to make the message clear.

Using Ephesians 2 as his text, he presented several cardinal truths that are part of the message youth need to hear: by grace we are saved; we are raised up and seated with Christ; we are trophies of God's grace; we are God's workmanship; we are God's close friends. Young people, Dr. Johnston said, are waiting to hear this message.

Tapes of both Dr. Johnston's Monday evening message and his Tuesday morning workshop (as well as tapes of other Conference speakers and workshops) are available from the National Office (524 College Ave., Ashland OH 44805). Tapes are \$5.00 each, 4 tapes for \$16.00, or all 11 tapes (4 evening speakers and 7 workshops) for \$45.00. Add \$2.00 to your order for shipping.

Tuesday Evening Worship:

## Renew Our Families

Reported by Paul Sluss

ONE of the greatest privileges we can experience as believers is meeting with God in a way that transforms us into the image of His Son. This was clearly the purpose of our Tuesday evening worship service at General Conference, as we focused our worship on the theme "Renew our Families."

The service was led by the worship team from the Smoky Row Brethren Church of Columbus, Ohio, under the direction of Pastor Tom Schiefer. They took us into the presence of God through a variety of vocal and instrumental numbers.

Professor Richard Parrott of Ashland Theological Seminary told the congregation that the evening offering would be used to provide financial assistance to Brethren churches and pastors participating in the "Renewing Pastor and People" seminars recently begun through the seminary. Dr. Parrott said that what the church needs today is pastors and leaders who are (1) alive in relationship with God; (2) alive in personal wholeness and well-being; and (3) alive and accountable to a loving community of faith. The "Renewing Pastor and People" program will encourage pastors and churches to capture a vision, reorganize for ministry effectiveness, and find out what God is doing and get involved in helping Him do it. An offering of \$1,507 was received.

### A man who loves his family

The featured speaker for the evening, Dr. Fred Finks, ATS President, was introduced by ATS Academic Dean Dr. David Hartzfeld. Dr. Hartzfeld introduced Dr. Finks as a "man who loves and is committed to his family, particularly his grandchildren. He also is a decisive leader who has brought Ashland Theological Seminary from a relatively unknown school to the forefront in quality seminary education."

Dr. Finks began his message on the family by reading from Joshua 24. Joshua, at the end of his life, had gathered all the people on the plain of Shechem and offered them this word of encouragement: "But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:15).



Photo by Jim Hollinger

*Dr. Fred Finks—challenging Brethren families to be committed to the Lord.*

"I come from an immediate family connected to the Lord," Dr. Finks stated, as he described the family environment that shaped his life and faith. His grandparents, Romeo and Ruth Finks, and his parents, Lee and Alice Finks, were all faithful members of the Maurertown, Virginia, Brethren Church.

Dr. Finks said that he can still see his father at the end of the couch and his mother out on the porch, both studying their Bibles and reading their Sunday school lessons. "I can't even name the Mouseketeers," he quipped, "because every time Walt Disney was on, we were in church."

"I grew up in an environment," he said, "in which we talked about God a lot. He was like a member of our family. So at the age of nine, at summer camp, it wasn't unusual to see me go forward on Thursday night to dedicate myself to full-time Christian service—because I saw the Christian life lived out every day at home."

So it was in Joshua 24. Joshua

assembles the people and reminds them of their heritage. He traces their family tree and points out how they are standing on the faithfulness of their forefathers. Faithful men are brought to mind—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. The people hear again the stories of God's faithfulness—how God brought them out of slavery, helped them conquer their enemies, and gave them a land, the land He had promised.

### A deep, dark secret

But Joshua also reminds the people of their deep, dark secret. God's people had always had a secret sin that kept them from fully knowing God's blessing. It was their fascination with idols—wooden and stone objects that they believed contained magical power. This secret sin went back as far as Abraham's father, Terah, and it continued during the time of slavery in Egypt, when the Israelites began to attach themselves to other gods.

This secret sin is not just something of long ago; it is happening even now in our culture, according to Dr. Finks. People 50 years of age and older can remember a nation that was primarily Christian. "White steepled churches dotted the countryside and radio preachers filled the radio air waves," he said. "We were a nation that trusted in God, and we wrote it on our money and put it on our government buildings. We weren't afraid to pray in schools or to pray at school board meetings for that matter. But somewhere along the way something changed. It was a compromise here and a compromise there until we sold ourselves into slavery and began to worship other gods."

Francis Schaeffer, a name widely known in church circles, stated more than 30 years ago that soon a "post-Christian world would emerge in which God would be sidelined and the church would be silent." Dr. Bach in a recent book called *Mayhem* tells how far we have slipped. He says that by the time children leave elementary school, they have viewed 8,000 murders and more than 100,000 acts of violence on TV, video games, and movies. It seems that our world is polluted with violence, and everyone is afraid. (continued next page)

As Joshua stood before the people, he could remember the nation when it was on the outside looking in. Joshua was just a young man when God's people stood at the brink of entering the Promised Land and grumbled, wanting instead the old days in Egypt. He knew what it was like to have a nation forget its faith in God. But Joshua would not falter. "All his life Joshua remained faithful to God. He never gave up his faith," Dr. Finks said.

Exodus 33:11 enlightens us as to why Joshua remained steadfast to God. Joshua was dedicated to the tabernacle, the place of God's special presence. He wanted to remain

with God. Is it any wonder that when God's people needed a new leader, that Joshua was the man?

When Joshua became Israel's leader, he was given this command from God: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9).

### A challenge to choose

The challenge that Joshua set before the people of Israel on the plain of Shechem is the very choice that Joshua himself had to make when he become their leader. So he asks them, "Will you follow the one true

God, or will you rely on the wooden statues you carry in your pocket? You must make a choice." The challenge from Joshua was to choose. He drew the line.

If the family is to survive, we all must protect, preserve, and share our faith with the generations to follow. What will the future of our people be? We, like Joshua and God's people, stand at a crossroads. Will we say with Joshua, "As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD"? The challenge is to choose, and the future depends on us. [✠]

*Rev. Sluss is pastor of the Smithville, Ohio, Brethren Church.*

## Tuesday Business Session

The first of two business sessions was held Tuesday morning of Conference week. The session was brief. In fact, Moderator John Shultz was hard-pressed to use up a reasonable amount of the 90 minutes allotted.

The first two items of business following the seating of delegates were the recognition of one new congregation and approval of a change in status of a second.

**Living Waters Community Church**, a new Brethren congregation being started in Mansfield, Ohio, was recognized as a class. Rev. Ron Miller serves as pastor of this class, which meets in the building of the former Walcrest Brethren

Church. The core group for Living Waters has been meeting for several months, and the congregation will have its birth Sunday September 19.

**Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship** of Peru, Ind., formerly a class, was recognized as a Mission Congregation. This is the second step on the way to becoming a fully-recognized Brethren church. Rev. Jim Thomas is pastor of this new congregation, which held its birth Sunday on March 21 of this year. The group meets in the Community Center at the Grissom Aeorplex (formerly Grissom Air Force Base) and averages approximately 80 in attendance for Sunday morning worship.

In his report to the Conference, Dr.

**Emanuel (Buzz) Sandberg, Executive Director** for The Brethren Church, presented Dr. Dan Lawson, the newly-called Director of Congregational Ministries, to the Conference. Dr. Lawson, until recently pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church of Goshen, Ind., will assume his new position in September.

Dr. Sandberg also announced that the Executive Board has decided to appoint a full-time Director of Stewardship and Development. He invited anyone who feels called to this position to contact him or Berniece Miller at the National Office.

An opportunity was given for delegates to add names to the slate of nominees that had been prepared. Delegates then had until 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday to cast their ballots.

**Ashland University President Dr. G. William Benz** welcomed Brethren to the university campus for the Conference. Referring to plans to hold the year 2000 General Conference at Estes Park, he commented, "You can go to Colorado next year, but this is your home. And we want you back!"

The Brethren denomination had a total of 13,494 members at the end of 1998, according to the **Statistician's report**, 362 fewer than at the end of 1997. On the other hand, the average Sunday morning worship attendance of 12,515 in 1998 was 406 higher than

in 1997. A total of 702 new members were added by reporting churches.

The Chaplain Endorsing Agent report included an expression of appreciation to **Chaplain Eugene J. Beekley** for his 25 years of service to the denomination as Chaplain Endorsing Agent. In this position he was concerned with recruiting, evaluating, promoting, and overseeing chaplains. He also kept track of congressional actions pertaining to religious ministries in the Armed Forces. With Chaplain Beekley's retirement from this position, Chaplain Joseph Hanna has assumed these responsibilities. [✠]

— R. Winfield

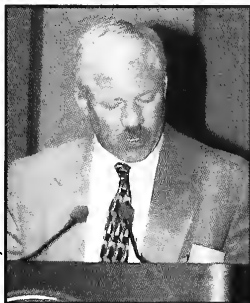


Photo by Jim Saunders

*Moderator John Shultz did a good job of keeping the business sessions light and lively.*

### Spiritual Formation Workshop

On Tuesday afternoon Ashland Seminary professors Terry Wardle and Richard Parrott began a three-session workshop on Spiritual Formation of the Local Church. Defining spiritual formation as the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the benefit of people everywhere, they discussed four stages in this process.

1. Awakening—when the church says, "There must be more than this!" Dissatisfaction with the way things are.
2. Purging and perfecting—giving up what's holding the church back; taking hold of what will move it forward.
3. Illumination—seeing and experiencing God and the church in new and powerful ways.
4. Union—a deeper relationship with God and with one another.

The goal of this process of spiritual formation is that Christ be glorified.

Cassette tapes of the three sessions are available from the National Office for \$15.00 (3 tapes, \$5.00 each).

## Wednesday Evening Worship:

# Renew Our Heart for the Lost

Reported by Ann DeVeney

### SHAME ON ME; SHAME ON YOU!

This was my sentiment after listening to Dr. Clive Calver, president of World Relief, speak Wednesday evening to the Brethren about renewing our hearts for the lost! But first, I must mention the preparation of our hearts that occurred when Dr. Doug Little, a professor at Ashland Theological Seminary, shared portions of his trip to Argentina to teach at the South American Theological Seminary.

In his brief comments before the offering, Dr. Little challenged his listeners with the fact that he had "met Christ in their faces"—in the faces of those we have partnered with at the seminary and in the faces of the students who attend. I wondered what changes I would need to make in my own life in order for my church family and the residents of Manteca where I live to see Christ in my face. Dr. Little used words like

hard work, commitment, and sacrifice to help us examine our hearts and minds and to prepare us to hear Dr. Calver. Just as Dr. Little's "heart was strangely warmed" by these people in Argentina, even so was mine by his brief comments and by Dr. Calver's message.

The charm of his British background came through as Dr. Calver relayed his heart of gratitude for the 168 percent increase in giving to World Relief, followed by statistics regarding the plight of the Sudanese, who are starving for lack of food and suffering for the cause of Christ. He refreshed our vision and renewed our call by reiterating the mission of World Relief—"churches helping churches help the poor in the name of Jesus." We so need such a reminder, when as American Christians we often leave the poor for our government to provide for.

Jesus' miracle of turning water into

wine (John 2:1-11) was Dr. Calver's focus as he provided five points for evaluating our need of renewed hearts for the lost. He shared a poem called "Indifference," written by someone after World War I. The poem portrays the aloneness of Christ at Calvary and faces us with the question, "Why should we need our hearts renewed for the lost,



Photo by Jim Saunders

*Dr. Clive Calver, president of World Relief, draws lessons from Jesus' miracle at Cana of turning water into wine.*

when reaching the lost is exactly what Jesus sent us to do?"

Dr. Calver perceives that Jesus' divine intention through the events of this miracle was to teach us:

**1. We can't divide our lives into the secular and spiritual.** Jesus began His ministry at a party, an unlikely place to share Himself. Thus, in the most unlikely places is probably where we can expect our best opportunities to share the love of Christ.

**2. We must have a sacrificial, committed lifestyle that will touch the world for Jesus.** We are to be people who transform our world, not those who are transformed by this world. Jesus touched a leper. We too ought to be involved in all facets of life, even unfamiliar situations and events, so as to be available for those opportunities. It's an awesome thought that we can afford to sacrifice now since we're going to spend eternity with Jesus! Even at the wedding Jesus showed that He saves the best until last!

**3. We must follow the instruc-**

## Ruth Calver speaks on sitting and serving

Dr. Clive Calver was accompanied to Ashland by his wife, Ruth, who spoke at the Missions Banquet that preceded the Wednesday evening service. Mrs. Calver used the account of Jesus with Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38-42 as the text for her message.

Confessing that she is an activist and not very good at sitting, she nevertheless acknowledged that this passage teaches us that sitting with Jesus comes first, and service later. Before we go, Christ wants our fellowship. Out of our fellowship with Jesus comes our service. "How is your heart?" she asked. "Is it set on Jesus?"

On the other hand, she continued, we can't just sit behind our church doors and have fun in Jesus. We need to get out where the people are. We keep saying to



Photo by Jim Hollinger

people, "Come to our church." But Jesus said, "Go!"

"We need to sit at Jesus' feet so that we can go out in His strength," Mrs. Calver said in summary. "Then let us go out into a world that needs Jesus."

— R. Winfield

**tion of Mary to do whatever Jesus asks us to do!** Was the miracle at this wedding the fact that Jesus changed the water into wine? No, that's not the miracle, for He made the water and the wine in the first place! The real miracle was that the stewards at the wedding

followed Mary's advice and **did** what Jesus told them to do! If we would follow the implications of the trendy acronym WWJD, just what results would we see here in America?

**4. We must allow our Savior and Lord to take the water of our weakness and turn it into**

**the wine of His love.** Jesus used the outcast, the rebel, the unexpected, and the downtrodden to bring about transformation in the lives of others. Are we willing, even though we perceive ourselves to be unequipped, to say "yes" to opportunities that will stretch us to be used of God?

**5. We must be willing, with our eyes on eternity, to be used to change our world.** He reminded us that the church is not a hospital for saints but a teaching ground for sinners. We must not be using and abusing our privileges as children of the King when there is work to be accomplished! [†]

*Mrs. DeVeny is a member of Northgate Community Brethren Church of Manteca, Calif., where her husband is the pastor.*

**Note:** Worship during the Wednesday evening service was led by a praise team from Grace Community Church, the new Brethren congregation being planted in Winchester, Va.

Introduced to Conference at the Missions Banquet and again during the Wednesday evening worship service were two women from The Brethren Church in Argentina—Marcela Rivero (L.) and Monica Santiago. The two have come to the U.S. to study at Ashland Theological Seminary as preparation for teaching at the new South American Theological Seminary in Argentina. The offering from the Wednesday evening service (which totaled \$3,766)



Photo by Jim Saunders

will be used for scholarships for Brethren students at the South American Theological Seminary and for books for the seminary's library. [†]

**DR. DAN LAWSON**, introduced to this Conference as the new Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church, gave a lively workshop presentation Wednesday morning of Conference entitled "Developing Lay Ministries in Your Church." The workshop focused on spiritual gifts and personality types and how these relate to becoming living sacrifices for Christ.

Defining spiritual gifts as special attributes given by the Holy Spirit to all members of the church, Dr. Lawson said that knowing our spiritual gifts enables us as members of the church to work together in love, harmony, and effectiveness without pride, envy, and false humility. He also made five suggestions (all starting with "e") for discovering one's spiritual gift(s): explore the possibilities, examine



Photos by Jim Saunders

your feelings, experiment, evaluate your effectiveness, and expect confirmation.

Having said that there is a correlation between the way God equips us (with spiritual gifts) and the way God created us (our personalities), Dr. Lawson talked about personality types. He focused specifically on the four basic temperaments and how these relate to Christian service.

As Christians, the goal of recognizing our personality types and of knowing our spiritual gifts is that we might become living sacrifices

to God (Rom. 12:1). As living sacrifices we are committed to *living* a Godly life, *loving* with a Christ-like love, and *serving* a Spirit-filled service. Dr. Lawson concluded his workshop with an overview of how to implement a living sacrifice model in a local church.

A cassette tape of Dr. Lawson's 1½-hour workshop (worth hearing!) is available from the National Office for \$5.00. The Conference workshop was a condensation of a day-long workshop that Dr. Lawson presents in local churches. [†]

— R. Winfield



Thursday Evening Worship:

## Renew Our Leadership

Reported by Roy Andrews

**T**HURSDAY EVENING'S worship service was led by Ashland Theological Seminary (ATS) personnel. Dr. Lee Solomon served as worship leader, and the ATS Choir—under the direction of Dr. Ron Sprunger—provided leadership for the congregational singing. Special music was also presented by the choir under the direction of ATS graduate Glenn Jones.

During the service ATS President Dr. Fred Finks announced that three couples—Ken and Lois Miller, Pete and Nancy Peterson, and Emanuel and Ann Sandberg had generously pledged a total of \$2.3 million for a new leadership center at the seminary. These pledges plus an earlier gift will cover all but \$700,000 of the \$4-million project. Dr. Finks said that in recognition of the commitment of Buzz and Ann Sandberg to this project, the facility will be named the Sandberg Leadership Center.

The message for the service was



Photo by Jim Saunders

*A severe injury to his ankle forced Dr. Martin Sanders to sit on a stool while presenting his message, but this in no way diminished his effectiveness.*

brought by Dr. Martin Sanders, associate professor of pastoral theology at Alliance Theological Seminary and president of Global Leadership. Dr. Sanders spoke about the



Photo by Jim Saunders

*These three couples (l. to r.) — Lois and Ken Miller, Nancy and Pete Peterson, and Ann and Buzz Sandberg — have pledged a total of \$2.3 million dollars to the new Sandberg Leadership Center at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

church's future by reflecting on the past. Mark 1 provided the scriptural basis for his reflections on "Ministry—Jesus' Style."

According to Dr. Sanders, the primary passion of the Lord Jesus was disciple-making. He said that coming to this conclusion was "elementary logic," since Jesus spent the vast majority of His time calling disciples, equipping disciples, and encouraging those disciples to make more disciples! He noted that this stands in contrast to much of what today's church expends its resources on.

Today our churches are program-focused, he said. We give our people "good stuff," but not always "life-changing stuff." The measure of the life-changing efforts of a church is whether disciples reproduce themselves into disciples in the next generation, and the next and the next!

Dr. Sanders challenged Brethren people to go beyond being merely "nice people" by adding to this quality the empowering authority of

Christ to change our world for Him. This raising of the standard will require a new attitude by both the pastoral leadership and the laity, which will be evidenced by how we spend our time in any given church ministry week. Dr. Sanders' measuring stick for this shift was contained in his statement, "The very nature and heart of the church is life change."

Turning his emphasis to life-change in the arena of evangelizing the lost, Dr. Sanders reminded the Conference that "committee work"

was never intended to be a substitute for "conversion work." His stories of practical evangelism tools, such as his list of "The Top Ten Sinners I Know," showed how Dr. Sanders makes use of such simple strategies as praying for a person weekly and contacting the person monthly.

Our effectiveness, according to Dr. Sanders, comes from the authority of Jesus Christ. The teachers of the Law quoted other people about God, while Jesus healed and taught as though He knew God! When speaking to our lost neighbors about Jesus, we need not be eloquent. We simply need to communicate that "we may be the only one in this town who cares about your soul." This passion for the souls of others must be balanced, however, with a sincere concern for our own families, the people who are closest to us.

Dr. Sanders closed his powerful message by pointing out that in Jesus' ministry style, He gave priority to the lost. Jesus was, in fact,



willing to give up opportunities to do highly effective ministry with believers in order to go elsewhere and proclaim good news to those who had not yet heard. This was the heart of Christ!

An invitation for those touched by Dr. Sanders' challenge to respond

was accepted by dozens, who came forward to ask that "they might capture the heart of Christ for the lost!" [†]

*Rev. Andrews is associate pastor of the First Brethren Church of Nappanee, Indiana.*

### Workshop by Martin Sanders

In addition to his Thursday evening message, Dr. Martin Sanders presented a workshop on Thursday afternoon entitled "Developing Leaders for Your Ministry." It focused on discipleship and mentoring.

"Disciplining others," Dr. Sanders said, "is a process whereby a Christian with a life worth emulating commits himself or herself for an extended period of time to a few individuals who have been won to Christ for the purpose of aiding and guiding their growth toward maturity and then to equip them to reproduce in the next spiritual generation."

"Discipleship," Dr. Sanders said, "is the umbrella under which the entire church and its ministry is to function." "Why are we doing things that do not contribute to discipleship?" he asked.

"If it's not about life-change, why are we doing it?" He later added, "Basic discipleship is crucial for anything we are going to do in mentoring and leadership development."

"Mentoring," Dr. Sanders continued, "is a relational experience in which one person (a mentor) empowers another (the mentoree) by sharing God-given resources." These resources can be wisdom, information, leadership, experiences, confidence, insight, etc. He said that in both discipleship and mentoring, the goal is to empower, not to control. He went on to differentiate between what mentoring is and what it is not, and to talk about kinds of mentors.

A cassette tape of this workshop—which is full of valuable insights—is available from the National Office for \$5.00. (See page 3 for details.) [†]

### Conflict Resolution Workshop

"Conflict Resolution and Prevention" was the title of a workshop presented Thursday morning by Brethren Church member Louise Waller, a counselor with Cornerstone Psychological Affiliates in Ashland, Ohio.

We usually see conflict as something negative. But if handled properly, conflict can be an opportunity to glorify God, serve others, and grow in Christ, according to Ms. Waller. She said that "miracles of reconciliation" can even be a means of winning people to the Lord.

Conflict is inevitable, so it is important to prepare the church to deal with it. Ms. Waller presented a number of suggestions for doing this. She noted that solutions to conflict must be empowered by God (which is different from secular mediation), get at the root of the problem, and focus on finding God's will (not our will) in the situation.

The workshop is on cassette tape and is available from the National Office for \$5.00. [†]

### Thursday Business Session

Letters from Brethren missionaries serving in other countries were read during the Thursday morning business session. Then thoughts turned to U.S. Missions, as two more new congregations were recognized by the Conference. Cross Keys Worship Center of Port Republic, Va., was recognized as a class, and Grace Community Church of Winchester, Va., was accepted as a Mission Congregation.

**Cross Keys Worship Center**, begun by Rev. Pat and Kathy Velanzon and a core group of about a dozen people, has been meeting since May 1998. The group, which now averages 45 in worship attendance, has held a number of creative ministries in its community, including Bluegrass gospel festivals and a Veteran's Day dinner.

Rev. Mike Woods is senior pastor and Chris Scott associate pastor of **Grace Community Church**, which had its Birth Sunday on September 27, 1998. Though less than a year old, this young congregation is already averaging approximately 110 in worship attendance.

In one of the few policy-making decisions of the Conference, delegates approved a recommendation from the



*Table Talks (round-table discussions) on 22 different topics — ranging from "Brethren Heritage in Germantown" to "Reaching Generation X on the Internet" — were presented on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons of Conference (15 topics on Tuesday; 9 repeats and 7 new topics on Thursday). One of the more popular Table Talks was "Estes Park 2000" — information about next year's General Conference in Colorado. Rev. G. Emery Hurd (3rd from r. in photo above) led the Table Talk on this topic on Tuesday, and Alan Schmiedt did so on Thursday.*

Polity Committee that the \$50 Conference delegate fee be waived for retired elders who are 65 or older or who are disabled.

A preview of a new video course on

Brethren distinctives was shown to the Conference, and it was announced that the video project should be completed yet this year. David Sollenberger, the  
(continued on next page)

Friday Morning:

## A Concert of Prayer

Reported by Richard Winfield

**"THE CONCERT** of prayer was outstanding." "The concert of prayer was beautiful." "Concert of prayer was awesome!" "The concert of prayer — powerful!" "The concert of prayer was the highlight of Conference for me."

These comments—from the Conference evaluation forms—are not exactly the kind you might expect about a 1¾-hour prayer meeting. But many Brethren found this concluding session of Conference to be a time of great blessing.

A concert of prayer is not what we usually think of when we talk about a concert—something to listen to. Rather, it's something to participate in, as those who attend lift up their prayers together—in concert—to the Lord.

Dr. Jerry Flora, Professor of Theology and Spiritual Formation at Ashland Theological Seminary, set the tone—a serene, worshipful tone—for the concert. Quoting words from a prayer—"O God, open the windows of our souls"—he said, "That's what we want to happen today."

The concert followed the daily themes of the week, beginning with the theme for Friday—"Renew Our Relationship with God"—and continuing with the other daily themes (see below). The service included instrumental and vocal music by Jim Frado (from Ashland) and Stephanie Boyd (from Vista, Calif.), congregational singing, periods of meditation, and, of course, time spent in prayer.

### Renewing Our Relationship with God

Following a brief meditation by Dr. Flora, Jill Stone of Sarasota, Fla., sang "O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus," with its almost mystical melody. Then Dr. Charles Munson, whom many Brethren would regard as the very model of a man with a deep relationship with God, offered the prayer for spiritual renewal.

### Renewing Our Youth

Jaime Gillespie, National Youth Leader, was in charge of this segment. She first asked the youth attending the BYIC Convention, who were all present for the concert of prayer, to spread out among the adults. She then asked the adults to lay hands on the youth and to pray for them. After this time of prayer, she asked the youth to reciprocate by laying their hands on the adults and praying for them. A concluding prayer was offered by Brethren pastor Rev. Rickey Bolden from Washington, D.C.

### Renewing Our Families

Karen Frado, a Brethren student at Ashland Theological Seminary, set the stage for this segment by recounting the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau (Genesis 32, 33). Then Jan Solomon, after sharing her father's (Brethren pastor Dr. J.D. Hamel's) account of his vision of heaven as he passed from this life to the next, led in prayer for reconciliation and renewal of families, as did her husband Tim.

### Renewing Our Leadership

Dr. Judy Allison, Associate Professor of Counseling at the seminary, and her husband John, pastor of the University Church, were the facilitators for this segment. As they directed, the Brethren laid hands on and prayed for four groups of leaders: pastors, worship/youth leaders, denominational leaders, and spouses of the previous three. A prayer by Mesu Andrews from Nappanee, Ind., concluded this part of the concert.

### Renewing Our Heart for the Lost

A video clip with musical accompaniment was presented showing fields of grain and "fields" of humanity "ripe unto harvest." Comments by Ronald W. Waters, Direc-

tor of Evangelism/Church Growth, supplemented the visual message. Following prayers from the platform for a renewal of the hearts of Brethren for the lost, the congregation was asked to divide into groups of three or four, with each person in each group praying specifically for one person who needs to come to Jesus.

The concert of prayer concluded with the singing of a hymn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." Dr. Flora pointed out that the message of this great hymn comes from the very center of the Old Testament book of Lamentations (3:21ff.), a book full of sorrow, weeping, and grief. In the midst of all this hopelessness is this beautiful message of hope. From the way the Brethren sang this hymn, it was obvious that this message struck a resonant chord in their hearts as well. A final prayer by Moderator John Shultz brought both the Concert of Prayer and the Conference to a close. [✠]

### Thursday Business Session

(continued from page 9)

videographer, was at the Conference taking additional video footage for the course.

A budget for the year 2000 was adopted by the Conference. It projects \$1,648,600 in income (\$630,600 for Congregational Ministries, \$1,018,000 for Missionary Ministries) and \$1,678,019 in expenses (\$652,495 for Congregational Ministries, \$1,025,524 for Missionary Ministries). The budget includes funds for a new Director of Stewardship and Development (see the Tuesday business session report on page 5).

The total delegate count was 361, which included 203 lay delegates, 137 elders (26 in absentia), 15 district delegates, and 6 from Conference cooperating agencies. The total was 5 less than in 1998. [✠]

— R. Winfield

**Notes:** An offering of \$2,195 was received during the Thursday evening worship service to provide start-up funds for a mentors' network for Brethren Impact Church Planting.

An offering of \$3,853 for Sudan was received at the World Relief Soup Lunch. Bruce Sexton, who was to speak at the soup lunch, was unable to do so because of illness.

Conference week:

## The BYIC Convention

By Jaime Gillespie

**G**OD IS GREAT! That's the first thing that comes to my mind when I sit back and reflect on this year's BYIC (Brethren Youth In Christ) Convention. I can think of no other way to explain the explosion of commitment and passion that burst forth from the 280 youth and advisors who flocked to Ashland, Ohio, for a week of powerful worship, challenging speakers, and life-changing decisions.

### *It all started Monday evening . . .*

I sat in the front row of the auditorium with my nerves screaming from a hectic day. I was worrying about the speech I would have to make in a few minutes and praying that the effects of the food-poisoning I was suffering from would hold off for a little longer.\* Suddenly a calm came over me and the Spirit



Jaime Gillespie, shown here in one of her zanier (or crabbier) moments during the BYIC Convention, is National Youth Leader for The Brethren Church.

*\*Jaime made it through her speech and through the rest of the evening, but early Tuesday morning she ended up in the hospital emergency room. She was put on an IV to rehydrate her and given some medicine, and by 9:30 a.m. she was back at the BYIC Convention.*

took over. From that point on, God ran the conference, not I nor any of the staff. That evening the youth had their first encounter of the week with God, as we participated in the powerful worship service led by the Park Street praise band and as we listened to the message by Dr. Jerry Johnston (see pp. 2 & 3).

### *Tuesday*

Tuesday dawned with fresh excitement, as the youth gathered to hear Jeremy Johnston, son of the Monday-evening speaker. Jeremy, who is only 19 years old, challenged the youth to be world-changers. He told them how God had used him, a teenage boy, to touch the lives of thousands of people. And he gave the youth hope and encouragement that they, too, could change the world!

Following our annual business session (see box below right), the youth were in for another new experience. Jeff and Zenita Kaplan, Brethren church planters at Rocky Mountain Community Church, Highlands Ranch, Colo., led us in a Passover feast in the Jewish tradition. As the youth tasted the matzo (unleavened bread), parsley dipped in salt water, and horseradish, they were challenged to expand their minds by walking through the Last Supper step by step and thinking about the meaning behind every element involved in the Passover.

After a day of heavy thinking about our lives and God's will, we headed into the last session of the

evening. *CPR*, a trio of improvisation comedians, had us rolling in the aisles. We learned that comedy, which often turns vulgar and dirty, can in fact be clean, Christ-centered, and still hilarious!

### *Wednesday*

Wednesday again started with the youth examining their lifestyles. Jamie Zile from Rock Springs Community Church challenged them to run from temptation and to commit to a life of purity before marriage. Again we watched and prayed as youth flocked to the altar to make a pact with God. After this emotional service, the youth divided into groups for workshops that would help them live out various aspects of their lives as Christ commands.

By Wednesday afternoon we needed time to kick back, relax, talk with



Photo by Marianne Hoyt

*The youth had some intense times of worship during the BYIC Convention, as here during their Communion service.*

friends, sumo wrestle . . . Yes, you read that right. It said sumo wrestle! Wednesday afternoon we had a fun day on the Ashland University (continued on next page)

### **BYIC Steering Committee**

One of the items of business cared for by the youth during the Convention was the election of the BYIC Steering Committee. Four former members were reelected to the committee: Rachel Pennington (Oak Hill, W.Va.), Andy Hunn (Nappanee, Ind.), Dave Schrecengost (Pleasant View, Vandergrift, Pa.), and Tim Hess (Park Street, Ashland, Ohio). Joining them on the committee will be Erin Simon (Brethren Bible, Louisville, Ohio), Kelly Swisher (St. James, Md.), and Sam Shultz (Jefferson, Goshen, Ind.).



Photo by Marianne Hoyt

*Greg Beam, youth pastor at the Elkhart, Ind., First Brethren Church, is all pumped up for some sumo wrestling during the BYIC Convention Fun Day.*

## BYIC Convention

(continued from page 11)

Quad, where the youth could participate in sumo wrestling, mountain climbing, go through an inflatable obstacle course, compete in basketball or sand volleyball, or just relax.

That evening we again gathered for another challenging service, this one led by Dave Ambrose, a youth pastor from the Cleveland area. Dave challenged us to act out every minute of our lives in a way that is pleasing to God. We then closed the evening with our Summer Min-

istries Review where all the youth got to see what their peers did this summer on missions trips, national ministry teams, district crusader teams, and as interns.

*Thursday*

Thursday morning, as the sun rose over the campus and tired youth dragged themselves from bed, God began working again. As *IGNITED* (the National Drama Team) took the stage, we had no idea how many lives might be changed. Their dramas touched nearly every young person there, challenging us to throw out all the garbage in our lives—including secular music, drugs, alcohol—**everything** that detracts from a perfect and pure relationship with Christ Jesus!

But the week wasn't over yet, as we prepared for a showcase of the enormous talent of our youth. The BYIC Coffeehouse was a huge success, as youth demonstrated their singing, dancing, comedy, and other talents. Guido Yoder (a.k.a. Tim Hess, Park Street) a member of the Brethren mafia, even dropped by to pay us a visit. After the Coffeehouse, the youth joined the adults for an evening of worship led by Ashland Theological Seminary personnel, with a message by Dr. Martin Sanders (*see pp. 8 & 9*). We then closed our conference with an energetic concert by the Christian band *BUCK* and a pizza party.

The Convention was spiritually challenging and renewing. Every-

one went away with the definite impression of having experienced God and of being forever changed because of that experience! [†]

**Note:** On Friday morning the youth joined the adults for the concert of prayer that concluded the Conference/Convention week.



Photo by Marianne Hoy

*Megan Stamper from the Tucson, Ariz., First Brethren Church, shares her vocal talent during the BYIC Coffeehouse.*

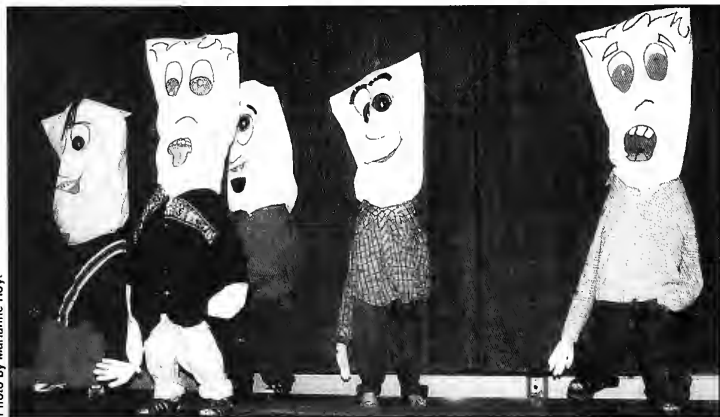


Photo by Marianne Hoyt

*Talent presentations during the BYIC Coffeehouse ranged from the sublime to the hilarious, with the dance of the Pillow People an example of the latter.*

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# The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 121, No. 9

A newsletter for Brethren people

October 1999

## Millennium Missionaries in Elkhart, Indiana

By Jim Davis

IN MATTHEW 25, Jesus taught His disciples that obedience is the real evidence of what we believe about God. He instructed His followers to feed the hungry, give the homeless a place to stay, look after the sick, and visit those in prison. He said, "Whatever you do for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you do for me." Meeting the needs of others is Christ's love in action.

During the past several months, the Lord has reinforced this message at the First Brethren Church of Elkhart, Ind., by calling us to a more practical ministry of meeting personal needs (see box below). Examples of similar ministries have been highlighted in the news recently. After the Oklahoma tornadoes, the church community in that area responded by housing, feeding, and clothing storm victims. Closer to home, a United Methodist church in Bristol, Ind., did the same for families who were burned out of their apartments.

### Millennium Missionaries and Y2K

According to Rev. Tim Garner, pastor of the Elkhart First Brethren Church, the initial impetus for this ministry was the Y2K computer glitch (see page 5). The church was concerned that it be ready to respond in case emergency needs developed because of this glitch. But out of this concern came the realization that the church ought to look beyond Y2K. It needs to be prepared to respond to any emergency (tornado, blizzard, ice storm, fire), and also to meet needs for food and shelter that are not related to any specific emergency. Thus Millennium Missionaries was born.

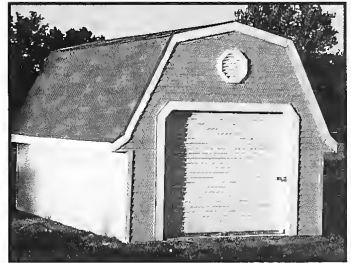
Our new ministry has been named "Millennium Missionaries," to reflect our calling to reach out to our local mission field as we enter the new millennium. This ministry has been segmented into three distinct teams—*Kingdom Builders*, *Christ's Commissary*, and *Rest and Refuge*.

### Kingdom Builders

The primary mission of Kingdom Builders is to prepare our church facility to meet potential community needs in times of crisis. Just as churches in Oklahoma did when tornadoes occurred there, we want to be able to serve as an emergency shelter in case a natural disaster or other significant community disruption occurs. This would include such things as providing temporary living space and possibly feeding large numbers of people. In addition to using the church building itself, our grounds are spacious and would provide room for a tent city if that became necessary.

To begin our process of preparation we did or are in the process of doing several things:

- We evaluated our entire facility to make sure that primary operating systems (heating/air conditioning, phones, security, etc.) were Y2K compliant.
- We ordered a 60 kilowatt generator that will provide power to the church building in case outside electrical service is lost.
- We constructed a new service building to house the generator and to meet other storage needs.
- We will build an attic over the primary Sunday school classes to provide long-term storage for our food pantry.



A service building was constructed to house a generator and to provide storage space.

- We will obtain County Health Department approval to serve food on the premises.
- We will install showers to facilitate temporary housing needs.

### Christ's Commissary

Christ's Commissary will have multiple missions. The initial mission is to develop a neighborhood food pantry. As we researched our community, we discovered that there is no food pantry in our area of Elkhart. In addition, over the past 2-5 years, two new neighborhoods and a large apartment complex have been built on three sides of our property.

In order to stock the food pantry,  
(continued on next page)

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*The well-stocked shelves of Christ's Commissary will serve as a food pantry for the community. A separate store of food will be held in reserve for emergency use.*

we have established a relationship with the North Central Indiana Food Bank. This not-for-profit agency collects foodstuffs, household goods, over-the-counter medicines, etc., from local businesses and resells them for 14 cents per pound. We are also in the process of establishing direct relationships with businesses such as Sam's Club, which will provide periodic direct donations.

We are now finalizing policies and procedures and planned hours of operation in expectation of a late October opening. The food pantry will also network with other local public and private organizations so that we can direct clients to other services as we become aware of them.

In concert with preparation as an emergency shelter, the second mission of Christ's Commissary is to build a separate store of food sufficient to feed 100 families of four for two weeks. This food may be distributed off site or prepared and served on site, depending on the circumstances.

Third, Christ's Commissary is establishing relationships with other local ministries. A group known as Kingdom S.E.A.L.S. Ministries provides assistance to policemen, firefighters, and affected citizens at fires and other local crises. As this group identifies urgent needs, we will provide food, clothing, and other household goods as we are able.

### Rest and Refuge

The Rest and Refuge team also has multiple missions. The team's primary mission is to collect nonfood items (clothes, bedding, towels, washcloths, household utensils, etc.) to support the emergency shelter and the Kingdom S.E.A.L.S. We will store many of these items at our facility. Other items will be pledged for use but will be stored at church members' homes. Collections just began in mid-September.

The second and more complex mission of the Rest and Refuge team is to coordinate the use of the church facility in the case of an emergency.

We will have plans in place on how to manage a temporary shelter, how to plan and serve meals, etc. We are in the very early stages of networking with such agencies as the Red Cross and local government so that we can integrate our plans with other contingency plans that exist for our community.

### Summary

Needless to say, these past several months have been times of great activity, lots of learning, and wonderful blessing. God has repeatedly reminded us that He equips those whom He calls. He has also taught us to follow His lead and to rely on Him to provide the resources. Our faith has been stretched and rewarded as we placed orders for items for which we did not yet have financing. Praise God, He is faithful!

This ministry has also provided an opportunity for all the people in our congregation to participate. Whether it's planning or praying, giving or building, it takes all parts of the Body to accomplish God's vision. We hold fast to the promise that when the workers of the field place themselves in the Father's hand, the harvest will be plentiful.

A Christian songwriter once wrote, "You may be the only Bible another man ever reads." An act of service in a time of personal need may be the key that unlocks the door of a person's heart for Jesus. Please pray for us that we will have not just the food and building, but the hearts and souls to meet the needs of those whom we serve. [✠]

*Jim Davis serves as vice-moderator of the Elkhart, Indiana, First Brethren Church and as coordinator of Millennium Missionaries.*

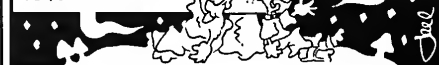
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### Pontius' Puddle

SOME SAY THE WORLD WON'T END AT THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM BECAUSE JESUS IS TO COME AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT, BUT I SAY WHAT BETTER TIME TO SURPRISE PEOPLE THAN WHEN THEY DON'T EXPECT IT BECAUSE IT'S TOO OBVIOUS! WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I THINK YOU OUGHT TO TRY LIVING IN SUCH A RIGHTEOUS MANNER THAT IT DOESN'T MATTER.

HOWCOM' THE BEST ADVICE ALWAYS RESULTS IN THE SHORTEST CONVERSATIONS?



© Joel Kaufmann

# There is a River . . .

By Dan Lawson

ONE of my favorite psalms is Psalm 46. In it we are repeatedly told that *God is our refuge and strength*. No matter what may happen in the world around us or in our personal lives, we can always be certain that God will be with us to give us refuge and strength.

It should be noted, however, that this psalm does not say that if we are God's people, we will never have problems. Nor does it say that if we are God's people, God will make our problems go away. Instead, the message the psalmist proclaims quite clearly is that God will give us the strength we need to go through those problems. God will be an *ever present help* in our times of struggle and despair.

## There is a river...

Verse 4 of Psalm 46 seems a little out of place. In verses 2 and 3 the psalmist talks about mountains falling into the sea, waters roaring and foaming, and mountains quaking with their surging. We get an image of chaos and devastation. Then, suddenly, the imagery changes to the tranquility of a quiet river. The psalmist describes it as *a river whose streams make glad the city of God*.

**"This psalm does not say that if we are God's people, we will never have problems."**

A couple of questions immediately come to mind when I read this verse. First, what city is the psalmist talking about? Second, what or where is this river? The psalmist helps us with the first question. He tells us in the second half of verse 4 that the city he is talking about is *the holy place*

*where the Most High dwells*. In verse 5 he tells us that God is within her (the city), and because of that she will not fall.

As Christians, we believe that God's Holy Spirit dwells within the hearts of those of us who believe. With this in mind, it is very easy for us to interpret this psalm to mean that we, the corporate body of believers, are the city of God about which the psalmist is speaking. God, in His Holy Spirit, dwells within us.

My second question, however, still remains. What is this river? If we, the Body of Christ, are the city, the dwelling place of the Most High, then the river can only be one thing. It is the continual outpouring of the love of God.

Psalm 1 compares a godly person to a tree planted beside streams of water. God's love is like that water. The water is a constant source of sustenance and strength for the tree. When the storms come, the tree stands firm, and when the drought comes, the tree continues to grow and flourish because of the water.

## Be still and know . . .

Recently I have felt as though my life is a little out of control. Trying to sell a house in one state while looking for a place to live in another; seeking to fulfill my obligations to one job while preparing for the responsibilities of a new position; packing; making school arrangements for the kids; trying to get the timing of selling and buying to work out; all of this has made life a little chaotic.

In verse 10 of Psalm 46 it seems as though God is talking directly to me and to others who find themselves in chaotic situations. He simply says, *Be still, and know that I am God*. I don't know about

you, but I have learned that when life gets stressful, this is the one thing I need to do: be still before the Lord. I have learned to cherish the quiet times I have with God. Those times alone with Him have given me the spiritual strength I need to stand firm amidst the struggles and turmoil of life. I need to stay close to that *river* whose streams can make me glad.

I once read a story about two trees planted by a stream. One flourished, but the other withered.

**"The world is full of chaos and turmoil that can block us from the spirit-sustaining Living Water."**

A farmer decided to dig out the withered tree to see why it was dying. He soon discovered the reason. Someone had buried large chunks of a concrete wall there years earlier. These chunks of concrete prevented the roots of the tree from reaching the life sustaining waters of the stream. As a result, the tree was dying.

The same thing can happen to us in our spiritual lives. The world is full of chaos and turmoil that can block us from the spirit-sustaining Living Water. Therefore, we need to make every effort, especially during times of struggle, to stay in constant contact with the Stream of Living Water, the Lord our God.

*The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*  
Psalm 46:7, 11

*Dr. Lawson recently resigned as senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church of Goshen, Ind., in order to move to Ashland to become Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church. Because of his new position, this will be his final article in this series, in which he has applied Bible truths to our personal lives.*

*We express our thanks to Dr. Lawson for his helpful insights during the past 19 months. And we pray God's richest blessings on him in his new position.*



# Renewing the church in Argentina through theological education

By Eduardo and Mariela Rodríguez

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

It has been a while since our last contact with you through the pages of *THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST*, and we have several news items that we want to relate to you. At the South American Theological Seminary (Seminario Teológico Sudamericano, STS) we are currently in the winter quarter\* of our second academic year. The average number of students now enrolled in the program is 110.

Since October 1998, in conjunction with The Brethren Church, Brethren Missionary Ministries, and Ashland Theological Seminary, we have organized three intensive courses—servant leadership, discipling, and spiritual gifts. All three courses provided great incentives to the students and were of considerable benefit to the study program. In July, Dr. Doug Little, Professor of Psychology at Ashland Theological Seminary, will be teaching an intensive course on counseling.

The various national committees as well as the students show enthusiasm for the work of STS. We see that the students have a desire to become more involved in the activities of their churches. Many of the

project papers that the students hand in as part of the requirements for their courses demonstrate their desire to excel in biblical and theological study, which makes us very happy.

The exchange among Brethren of different local churches has also been productive, since for a long time churches have had only their personal experiences to draw on. The opportunity to think together, to dialog on topics of faith, and to study the Word

of God together will substantially enrich The Brethren Church in Argentina. We believe that in the near future these experiences by the church leaders will influence the various ministries and activities in the church that produce evangelism at the local and national levels.

All this has been possible—and we believe will continue to be possible—because of various factors. The support of The Brethren Church in the

U.S. has not ceased since STS was born. Through the efforts of Dr. Emanuel Sandberg and Rev. Reilly Smith, immense support has been generated. We recall that because of an offering of the Central District, we were able to purchase a car, which enables us to visit the local churches. In addition, the Executive Board of STS requested consideration of the acquisition of a piece of property where the offices of the seminary are now located and



*Meeting of a study group during the course on spiritual gifts. The third person from the right in the picture is Señor José Rivero, president of The Brethren Church in Argentina.*

where the directors live. Thanks again to the efforts of Dr. Sandberg and Rev. Smith, a loan was granted, making it possible to negotiate the purchase of that property. On a portion of the property, dormitories for resident students will be built, as well as classrooms and a library.

We cannot omit giving thanks for the notable contribution received from the W.M.S., which designated last year's Project Offering and also

other significant offerings for support of the work of STS. Moreover, contributions have come from local W.M.S. groups, who have sent cards and letters full of affection and encouragement. To all of these women we say, "Thanks a lot!"

There are also



*Shown are participants in the intensive course on discipling offered by the South American Theological Seminary. Dr. Richard Allison, Professor Emeritus of Christian Education at Ashland Theological Seminary, who taught the course, is at the left end of the front row in the picture.*



churches and individuals who continue to contribute to the ministry of STS. Ashland Theological Seminary, under the direction of its president, Dr. Fred Finks, continues to provide academic assistance in the form of books, equipment, professors from that institution for the intensive courses, and connections with other persons interested in the calling of STS.

Brother Harley Gerber is one of the strongest supporters of our seminary. He has committed himself to a monthly plan of economic support and assistance in the area of development. The Winding Waters Brethren Church has supported us from the beginning with a monthly offering. The National Office (The Breth-

ren Church and Brethren Missionary Ministries) continues to be an important point of reference as it stands beside us in each initiative.

If we were to make a list of the names of everyone who has helped us in each aspect of STS, we would take up an entire issue of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST. What we do promise from STS is to strive to serve the Lord efficiently, providing ministerial training to as many people as have need of it, and to pray for each one of you.

The needs are still many. We require resources in order to organize a meeting of the coordinators of study who come from the various churches. Above all we need more brothers and sisters to collaborate

with STS through planning and promotion as well as in the coordination of each course of study. The work is immense!

May you, dear Brethren, be richly blessed by the Lord whom we all serve. Let's remember each other in prayer and supplication, asking that through our efforts the renewal of the church in Argentina might be advanced abundantly, and that the same may happen in the U.S.

We support you in the slogan set forth by the Executive Director—**Visualize Renewal.** Amen. [†]

*Eduardo and Mariela Rodríguez serve as directors of the South American Theological Seminary. This article was translated by Allen Baer.*

## Jesus and Y2K

By G. Emery Hurd

IN HIS SERMON on the Mount, Jesus talks about worry this way:

*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air: they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?*

Matthew 6:25-27, NIV

These are important words as we close this millennium and move to the next, especially with all the concern about possible Y2K problems. If you somehow haven't heard, some computers and the computer chips imbedded in everything from toasters to nuclear missiles are unable to read the year 2000. This is because in the early days, computer programmers—to save space—only used the last two digits for years. These two digit date-keepers will read the year 2000 as "00" and may think it is 1900 instead of 2000. There are now many books, videos, and seminars presenting possible doomsday scenarios caused by this miscalculation, which will be multiplied billions of times throughout a world seemingly dependent upon computers.

First, a dose of reality. For there even to be a problem, the system or device has to use the date some way in a significant calculation. Your toaster may not know whether it's 1900 or 2000, but will it really matter? Most of the embedded chips are not used to track dates, so the point for them is irrelevant.

Most government and business entities are now year 2000 compliant (have dealt with the problem). This is so for one simple reason: it would be economic suicide not to be ready. If one bank was ready and one not, which one would stay open? There will be some minor disruptions in some services, but in many cases mechanical or human backups can deal with the problems. Most of us have seen storms disrupt utilities and travel for a brief time. The preparations most of us make for a typical winter storm will be all the preparation we will probably need.

What does Y2K have to do with our faith? Everything! The turn of the millennium has confronted us with the reality that human efforts can and do fail. The very technology that we have come to trust as the god of the nineties turns out to be as shallow and untrustworthy as all of the other gods we have fashioned with our own hands and imaginations over the centuries. Y2K is just the latest example of how we pretend

that we can handle the problems and difficulties of life on our own. We refuse to acknowledge how much of life is beyond our control and that our central need is to trust a loving God who cares for us and about us.

Jesus tells us that God loves us. While preparation is a good thing, He says that trusting in a loving God is the ultimate preparation for the possible trials of life. Everybody wants to be prepared for the expected and unexpected trials of life, but Jesus says:

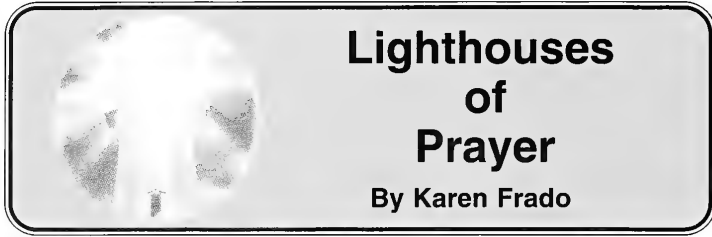
*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Matthew 6:33-34, NIV

True preparation comes when we admit we need someone bigger than ourselves and when we then embrace God's love and forgiveness demonstrated through Jesus Christ.

Most of our fears about Y2K deal with concerns regarding our financial stability and our ability to get to our money in the next millennium. On every quarter and every dollar bill it says "IN GOD WE TRUST." Maybe we should listen to what our money is trying to tell us! [†]

*Rev. Hurd is pastor of the Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church. This article was initially published in the July 24, 1999, issue of the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle. Reprinted with permission.*



# Lighthouses of Prayer

By Karen Frado

A LIGHTHOUSE is an anchored pillar designed to protect ships from danger. On days with clear skies, its horn blares far and wide to passing ships, warning them of the perilous rocks near the shore. But it is during a storm that a lighthouse's purpose is most critical.

Turn on the news or read the newspaper. There's no denying that we live today in a stormy, sin-tossed world, a world in which tempests rage and darkness threatens eternal souls. Many of our friends and neighbors need a lighthouse in their midst—a lighthouse that offers protection by enveloping them in its radiance.

The **Lighthouse Movement** is an effort to pray for, care for, and share Christ with every man, woman, and young person in America by the end of the year 2000. More than 350 denominations and Christian ministries are collaborating to establish millions of **Lighthouses of Prayer** from coast to coast across our land.

**Lighthouses of Prayer** are places where believers meet together to pray for their neighbors, coworkers, teammates, and friends. **Lighthouses of Prayer** may be in homes, places of business, work sites, college dorms, prison cells—any place where two or more believers have made a commitment to **pray, care, and share** within their sphere of influence.

You may ask, *How do I pray for someone I do not know?* Try using the word **BLESS** to remember five aspects of intercessory prayer:

- |          |           |                                 |
|----------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| <b>B</b> | Body      | health, protection, strength    |
| <b>L</b> | Labor     | work, income, security          |
| <b>E</b> | Emotional | joy, peace, hope                |
| <b>S</b> | Social    | love, marriage, family, friends |
| <b>S</b> | Spiritual | salvation, faith, grace         |

*How do I care for people I do not*

*know?* Be friendly! Reach out with kindness. Pick up trash on their lawn or put their paper by their door. Invite them to stop by.

*How do I share with someone I do not know?* Seek natural opportunities to share your faith. When appropriate, share your personal testimony or simply a few praises. Pray for God to provide openings for you to share His Word.

*Our denomination understands the power of community in Christ.* Each one of us can play a vital role in developing communities of prayer throughout our country. Each one of us can be a light shining in the midst of the storm.

Jesus said, *You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven* (Matt 5:14-16).

## National Lighthouse Launch

"Light the Nation," a two-hour TV event featuring top Christian leaders, nationally recognized musicians, and actual Lighthouse families, will launch the Lighthouse Movement nationally on Saturday morning, October 16. Ed Siloso, founder and president of Harvest Evangelism and best-selling author of *That None Should Perish*, will host the program.

The two-hour TV event will originate from Madison Square Garden and be broadcast via the Pax TV channel, low-cost satellite dishes, and hundreds of Christian stations. It will be presented from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Eastern and Pacific time zones, and from 10 a.m. to noon in the Central and Mountain time zones.

The Bible urges that "requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone" (1 Tim. 2:1). This prayer movement allows all believers to serve in this ministry and to become "beacons of light in the world" (Phil. 2:15-16), specifically in their own neighborhoods.

**Why not spearhead this powerful prayer movement in your own community?** All across our nation experiences of God's blessings are being realized where **Lighthouses of Prayer** have been established and where the participants are active in serving their neighborhoods.

Numerous resources are available to assist you and to spark creative ideas (such as the BLESS acronym provided by Hope Ministries). Additional items available include door hangers, devotional booklets, and other resources. But it is not necessary to have these materials in order to establish and maintain a Lighthouse ministry. Brethren pastors have received reproducible materials for **Lighthouses of Prayer**, all of which are also available from the National Office.

For your convenience, we also provide the following list of resources for the **Lighthouse Movement**:

- [www.lighthousemovement.com](http://www.lighthousemovement.com) (or 1-800-995-8572) — information about the Lighthouse Movement; how to register your Lighthouse
- [www.missionamerica.org](http://www.missionamerica.org) — *The Lighthouse* monthly newsletter
- [www.missionamerica.org/creative.html](http://www.missionamerica.org/creative.html) — creative ideas for Lighthouses
- [www.hopeministries.org](http://www.hopeministries.org) (or 1-800-217-5200) — how to start and maintain a Lighthouse; resource materials
- [www.fastingprayer.com/lighthouses.html](http://www.fastingprayer.com/lighthouses.html) (or 1-800-888-FAST) — how to start a house of prayer
- [www.ashland.edu/~rwaters/prayer.htm](http://www.ashland.edu/~rwaters/prayer.htm) — creative ideas for prayer, evangelism
- [www.waymakers.org/prayer.html](http://www.waymakers.org/prayer.html) — prayer and evangelism ideas
- [www.jesusvideo.org](http://www.jesusvideo.org) — information about the *Jesus* video
- [www.renewalministries.org](http://www.renewalministries.org) — ideas on prayer and renewal [✞]

*Mrs. Frado, a member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, is a student at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

# The why and how of pastor appreciation

By Editor Richard Winfield

**O**CTOBER is Pastor Appreciation Month. I hope that the leaders of your congregation have planned a special occasion during this month to honor your pastor. If not, you need to encourage them to do so. Even if it is too late to do something in October, it's okay to do it in November or December.

In September the National Office sent your church moderator a copy of *Clergy Appreciation Month*. This booklet from Focus on the Family is a planning guide for honoring pastors. It is full of information—celebration suggestions, gift ideas, even a sample order of worship for an appreciation service. It can help your church honor your pastor.

But in addition to what your church does this month, this is a good time for you to show your personal appreciation to your pastor—and to his wife and family as well. And if your church is not doing something special for your pastor this month, it is especially important that you honor him personally.

## Why honor your pastor?

Everyone needs to be appreciated, and pastors are no exception. And that appreciation needs to be expressed. You may have the highest regard for your pastor, but if you don't tell him, he will never know.

But perhaps you are thinking, "Why should we have a special time to show appreciation to pastors? Don't they get lots of expressions of appreciation throughout the year?"

Apparently not! In the introductory section of the booklet from Focus on the Family that I mentioned above, this comment appears: "In our ministry to pastors and their families, we have found that most members of the clergy feel isolated, insecure and only rarely affirmed."

Another reason for expressing appreciation to pastors is because of the high expectations made of them. Words of appreciation help them know they are meeting those expectations.

Besides, pastors receive a lot of criticism. It takes a lot of appreciation to counterbalance that criticism.

Finally, the Bible directs us to honor pastors. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 5:17, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." Some Bible students think "double honor" includes an extra measure of pay. Be that as it may, it at least means a double dose of appreciation.

## How to honor your pastor

What are some ways you can show appreciation to your pastor? One of the most obvious ways is by expressing your thanks to him for his ministry to you. It's even better if you can be specific—if you can express appreciation for some particular blessing or some difference he has made in your life. It's better yet if you take the time to express this in a card or a letter. A written expression of appreciation makes a greater impact than a spoken one. Some

pastors keep these in a file and re-read them from time to time.

But in addition to these spoken or written expressions of thanks, you can show your appreciation in other ways. You could take your pastor out to lunch (or if you are a woman, you could take his wife out to lunch). Or you could take the whole pastoral family out for a meal. Another option is to offer to keep the children while the pastor and his wife go out for an evening.

You can also show appreciation to the pastor and his family by an appropriate gift—food, flowers, handicrafts, a book. Another possibility is a service coupon (good for raking leaves, washing his car, caring for the children, washing windows, etc.)

Another very important gift you can give to your pastor is a pledge to pray for him, his family, and his ministry. Make it specific. Don't just say, "I'll pray for you." Make a pledge that on a certain day (or days) every week, you will spend time praying for him. Again, put it in writing.

Make it a point this month to express appreciation to your pastor—and to his wife and family. Show them your love and appreciation in specific and tangible ways. Your pastor will be a better pastor because of it. And his family will receive a blessing as well. [✠]

## Pastor appreciation at Raystown

**Saxton, Pa.** — The Raystown Brethren Church seized upon August 22 as an opportunity to honor Pastor Alfred Chamberlain and his wife Bonita.

On that Sunday, Pastor Chamberlain had asked Rev. Reilly Smith, director of Missionary Ministries, to report on Brethren Missions and to preach the morning message. Following the worship service, a beautiful baptism was performed in the nearby Juniata River.

Then at 1:00 what had been billed as the annual Sunday school picnic turned out to be an appreciation time for Pastor Al and Bonita. In preparation for this event, the Raystown Brethren had purchased gifts, invited friends from the community to attend, and hired a Country and Western

band to present music. The Chamberlains were completely surprised!

The picnic included huge amounts of food, including some of the hottest chicken wings imaginable! The Sunday school provided games and prizes for the children. Someone even brought squirt guns for a water fight.

Every one enjoyed the picnic, and Pastor Al and Bonita received a wonderful surprise and a generous outpouring of love. [✠]



The Chamberlains open their cards and gifts.

Report and photo by Reilly Smith

# GRAND OPENING / BIRTH SUNDAY

## LIVING WATERS COMMUNITY CHURCH

### SEPTEMBER 19, 1999 • TIME 10:00 am

Pastor Ron and Sandy Miller  
with sign announcing the birth Sunday  
of a new Brethren church.



Reported by  
**Ronald W. Waters**

Missions, which assumed the church building and parsonage, worked with the Millers by making the facilities available.

The Millers spent many hours refurbishing the parsonage and the church building while also bringing together a core team. They had

**T**HE LIVING WATERS Community Church of Mansfield, Ohio, opened to a full house on Sunday, September 19. Attendance for the grand opening/birth Sunday service was 162. Most stayed for a fellowship meal prepared by the core team of this new Brethren church.

Pastor Ron Miller spoke on the topic "Does Anyone Really Care?" He addressed the concerns of people in the community and the world who are hurting or feeling lonely. Using several passages of Scripture, he noted that God cares, Jesus cares, and the people of God care. He emphasized that Living Waters Community Church exists to demonstrate God's care and love among people in the Mansfield area.

The service opened with an extended time of worship led by an eight-member praise team coordinated by Scot Millhouse. Millhouse also sang "He Ain't Heavy; He's My Brother," accompanied by a dramatization presented by Brady Gott, Michael Hetrick, Mark Holsinger, and Sandy Miller.

The church was decorated inside and out in a festive motif. Helium-filled balloons were hung along the fence paralleling US 30 in front of the church building, as well as in the parking lot and on the entrance to the building. A 30-foot banner and the lighted church sign announced the opening celebration.

Core-team members extended a warm welcome in the parking lot, at the front door, and at the entrance to the worship center. A fully-staffed nursery and children's church were offered for little ones through age 8.

A promotional campaign during the four weeks prior to birth Sunday announced the official opening of the new church. The campaign

included newspaper ads, daily radio spots, and three direct mail pieces. Core-team members were also active in extending invitations.

The opening celebration followed six preview services held monthly since March. These were worship services that gave potential members a look at what worship in the new church would be like. They also gave core team members opportunities to invite others to join them and a chance to "practice" in a real-life environment. Attendance at the six preview services averaged about 80, with a high of 100 on July 4.

#### A burden for the Mansfield area

God gave the vision for the new church to Pastor Ron and Sandy Miller, formerly of the Linwood, Md., Brethren Church, while Ron was attending Ashland Theological Seminary. When the Walcrest Brethren Church of Mansfield closed in July 1997, the Millers were burdened with the need for a Brethren church in the Mansfield area. Brethren

help on occasional workdays from churches in the Ohio District and from the 1998 National Brethren Youth Convention participants.

Many of the initial core team members came as a result of Sandy Miller's acquaintances at her place of employment. Other early core team members came from Park Street Brethren Church, with the support and encouragement of Pastor Arden Gilmer.

The vision of Living Waters Community Church is to "be a 'true' community church . . . that actively seeks those who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ." In addition, the church envisions planting other congregations and mentoring other church planters in an effort to extend the ministry of Christ in the Mansfield area and beyond.

Pastor Ron and the members of Living Waters extend their thanks to all Brethren for their encouragement and support. Please continue to pray for the growth and development of this new church. [✠]



Nearly every seat was filled for the worship service, and some people were standing.



## Jen Thomas now serving with Brethren missions in Mexico

**Ashland, Ohio** — Jennifer (Jen) Thomas, who recently completed two years of mission service in Mexico City with the mission agency Spearhead, returned to Mexico City on October 2 as a Brethren missionary.

While with Spearhead, Jen spent part of her time working with Brethren missionaries Todd and Tracy Ruggles, but she also had other responsibilities with Spearhead. Now she will concentrate on Brethren mission work in Mexico City.

Jen's main focus will be on youth. Her initial task will be to develop a youth ministry at Jesus del Monte. She will disciple young people who are already attending the church and help them evangelize their friends.

As she works with the youth, she will watch for potential leaders among them with whom she can work to develop their leadership abilities. She will also identify and train adult youth leaders. The goal is to develop a model that can be used in other Brethren churches in Mexico City so that each church can establish a strong youth ministry. Eventually Jen will help the local ministries organize an inter-church youth organization for encouragement, fellowship, and training.

In addition, Jen will lead at least one women's Bible study, train to lead theological education by extension classes, and help with administrative tasks.

[T]



*The Cross Keys Worship Center group on their first anniversary Sunday.*

## Cross Keys celebrates first anniversary

**Port Republic, Va.** — Members and friends of the Cross Keys Worship Center celebrated the first anniversary of their congregation on Sunday, May 23, with 59 people in attendance.

Music for the special service was presented by the South River Gospel Band—a Cross Keys group that includes guitars, banjo, mandolin, and singers. The message was presented by guest speaker Rev. Dave Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, who encouraged the congregation to continue to share the Gospel.

A lavish carry-in dinner with a time of warm fellowship followed the anniversary service. This, in turn, was following by an impromptu jam session with a dozen musicians participating.

A little over a month later, the Cross Keys brethren rejoiced in the baptism of eight believers. Following the morning worship service on June 27, the congregation gathered at the Shenandoah River, where Pastor Pat Velanzon, assisted by Mike Lambert (in training for pastoral ministry), baptized the eight believers.

In its continuing efforts to reach out to the

community, Cross Keys Worship Center held a "Sundae Social" in Grottoes Town Park on July 11. The event included sundaes, games, and music (by the South River Gospel Band, of course).

Then on Friday evening, July 30, the Cross Keys congregation sponsored an event called "Hot Dog! Blue grass Music & More." People of the community were invited to come after work for hot dogs and other food, and then to stay around for music. Local Bluegrass groups were invited to come for fun, practice, and exposure.

The Cross Keys group expresses its thanks to all the Brethren who have prayed for this new congregation. Pastor Pat and Kathy Velanzon add a special thanks to the W.M.S. women across the country who have encouraged them with cards and prayers.

— reported by Kathy Velanzon



*Baptized on June 27 were (back row, l. to r.) Mandy McCrary, Wes and Tracey Wade, Pastor Pat Velanzon (who did the baptizing), Leon Ervin, Robert Wine, (front) Dawn and son Dustin Painter (in front of his mother), and Mike Eye.*



## Inner-city ministry's new name identifies Brethren connection

**Indianapolis, Ind.** — The inner-city ministry of Rev. Gene and Georgia Bell in Indianapolis has a new name. Formerly called "Small Independent Congregations" (SIC), it is now "The Brethren Inner-City Ministries of Indianapolis" (BIC). The change in name occurred by official action of the Steering Committee of the inner-city ministry.

Concerning the name change, Rev. Bell said, "I am of the opinion that our new name will identify this ministry as being one of the special ministries of The Brethren Church." He went on to say, "I am not hesitant about letting people know that this is a ministry of The Brethren Church, and that I am an ordained elder in The Brethren Church."

Eight children from the inner-city ministry attended camp at the Brethren Retreat Center this past summer, five of them at the Junior II Bible Camp and three at the Junior Bible Camp. All had a good experience and want to return next year. Scholarships to help the children attend were provided by the Roann, Ind., and Bryan, Ohio, Brethren Churches and by the Retreat Center.

Thirteen of the children, all members of the Saturday Afternoon Kids Klub, were guests recently of Pastor John and Kerry Garrett and some of the members of the Oakville, Ind., First Brethren Church, who treated them to a picnic, hay ride, horseback riding, and a tour of a dairy farm.

Rev. Bell commented, "I was impressed and uplifted by the reception which Pastor John, Kerry, and the church members extended to the kids. Their love and acceptance of the group, which was evident to the kids, helped them to become comfortable and to enjoy themselves as children." [¶]

## Paul T. Sluss ordained to Brethren eldership August 8 at Smithville, Ohio, Brethren Church

**Smithville, Ohio** — Paul T. Sluss was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and his wife Jennifer was consecrated as the wife of an elder at a service held Sunday afternoon, August 8, at the Smithville Brethren Church.

Dr. Charles Munson delivered the ordination sermon, entitled "With Outstretched Arms." Others participating in the service included Art Carr, pastor of Christian Education and Discipleship at the Smithville Church; Mark Dravenstott, moderator of the Smithville congregation; Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal, Ashland University Provost; and Brethren Elders Jim Koontz, Tom Schiefer, Jim Rowsey, David Cooksey, and Jim Sluss (father of Paul).

Special music was presented by Rev. Eric Bargerhuff, Paul's roommate in college. Rev. Rex McConahay led the congregational singing. Phyllis Snyder played the organ and Geoffrey Zimmerly the piano.

Paul Timothy Sluss was born April 14, 1971, in Elkhart, Ind., the son of Rev. Jim and Lois Sluss. He attended Warsaw (Ind.) Christian School, East Union High School (Manteca, Calif.), and was graduat-



*Rev. Paul and Jennifer Sluss with daughter Madeline.*

ed from Huntington (Ind.) North High School. He received a Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Ashland University in 1993, and a Master of Divinity degree from Ashland Theological Seminary in 1996.

While in high school and col-

lege, Paul spent three summers as a Brethren Crusader and then one summer as an intern at the West Alexandria Brethren Church under the direction of Rev. David Oligee. While in seminary he spent two years as a pastoral assistant to Rev. Jim Rowsey at the Smithville Church. Then in his last year of seminary, he was called to serve the Brethren Bible Church in Louisville, Ohio, where he served for two years. In May of 1997 he accepted a call to return to the Smithville Brethren Church as senior pastor, where he continues to serve.

On June 5, 1993, Paul married Jennifer Rahm of Bucyrus, Ohio. A 1994 graduate of Ashland University, Jennifer taught English at Ashland High School for four years before resigning to enjoy being a mother to daughter Madeline, born August 10, 1998. [¶]

## World Relief helping churches provide aid to East Timorese

**Wheaton, Ill.** — World Relief is helping more than 100 Protestant churches from the Indonesian territory of East Timor work together to aid refugees pouring out of that territory. More than 200,000 have fled as pro-Indonesia militias massacre civilians in East Timor. Church leaders were also forced to flee, but churches are carrying out relief work from neighboring West Timor.

The churches are providing food,

clothing, medicine, and tents for approximately 1,000 refugees in three locations for 30 days. World Relief provided half of the \$20,000 needed for supplies and transportation, the churches are providing the rest.

"The fact that churches across Indonesia are providing the other half . . . is remarkable given that Indonesia's economy has been near collapse," says Arne Bergstrom, World Relief's Vice President of International Ministries.

World Relief is also continuing its work in Turkey and Kosovo. [¶]



# Arnold L. Owens ordained a Brethren elder June 27 at Pleasant View Brethren Church

**Vandergrift, Pa.** — Arnold L. Owens was ordained a Brethren elder and his wife Joyce was consecrated as the wife of an elder on Sunday morning, June 27, at the Pleasant View Brethren Church in Vandergrift.

Dr. Leroy Solomon, Dean of Institutional Development at Ashland Theological Seminary, delivered the ordination message, entitled "Servants, Not Celebrities." Rev. T.J. McLaughlin, pastor of the Pleasant View Church, and Rev. Glenn Grumbling assisted with the ordination procedure. The action of the local church calling for ordination was read by Moderator Teresa



Rev. Arnold and Joyce Owens.

tion from T. Wingate Andrews High School, he joined the United States Army. As a career military service person, Arnie served both God and country as a Chaplain's Assistant. He also continued educational opportunities as duties permitted. He retired from active service in March 1993, after 20 years in the army.

While in the service, Arnie met

Hensley. The prelude for the service was presented by Bonnie Schrecengost, and Diana Park provided special music.

Arnold (Arnie) Owens was born December 23, 1953, in High Point, N.C., the son of Lonnie and Edith Owens.

Upon graduation from T. Wingate Andrews High School, he joined the United States Army. As a career military service person, Arnie served both God and country as a Chaplain's Assistant. He also continued educational opportunities as duties permitted. He retired from active service in March 1993, after 20 years in the army.

Joyce A. Klingensmith of North Apollo, Pa., also serving in the Army as a Chaplain's Assistant. They were married in February 1990. When Joyce's tour of duty was completed in 1994, they moved to Vandergrift, where they joined Pleasant View Brethren Church and became active in the ministry of the congregation.

The following year they answered God's call to full-time Christian service by moving to Ohio and enrolling at Ashland Theological Seminary. They also began pastoring as a team the Florence Congregational Church in Berlin Heights, Ohio. They both completed their work at the seminary in 1999, receiving Masters of Divinity degrees this past May. In September Rev. Owens became pastor of the Cerro Gordo, Ill., Brethren Church. [✠]

# Despite rain and heat, crowds of people flock to Park Street Church's sixth annual block party

**Ashland, Ohio** — Neither rain nor heat kept the crowds away July 19th when Park Street Brethren Church of Ashland held its sixth annual block party.

A combined effort of the Fellowship and Outreach Ministries, this year's block party was "the best one yet," according to Bob Buford, Park Street's pastor of Adult Ministries and Outreach. Rev. Buford estimated the attendance at between 400 and 500 people.

While in past years the block party served as a kick-off to vacation Bible school, this year the function was designated strictly as an outreach function. And whereas in past years a small donation was requested for the various food items that were available, this year the food, fun, and fellowship were offered at no cost to those who attended.

Each Adult Bible Fellowship (Sunday school class) sponsored one or more booths offering food or an

activity. Food items ranged from pies and cookies to fresh-squeezed lemonade and hot-off-the grill sausages and hot dogs. Some of the activities were face-painting, pony rides, a cupcake walk, fish pond, and a dunking booth.

A representative from the Ashland Police Department was present with a D.A.R.E. car. And Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, had a table presenting Brethren Missions. Many Ashland merchants donated door prizes, and

these were given out at various times during the afternoon.

Less than an hour into the party, a much-needed rain fell—for about 15 minutes. It was such a hot day that some people stood out and got wet. Others ran for the tents. According to Kathy Mack, who worked the pie and cookie table, "The rain just added to the fun and fellowship as people scrambled to stay dry."

— reported by Corky Fisher



The shower provided (l. to r.) Borika, Agoston, and Emöke Dobos an opportunity to use their special umbrellas.





# The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 121, No. 10

A newsletter for Brethren people

November 1999

## A Body of Gratitude

By Richard Bauman

IT IS USUALLY pretty easy for me to remember to thank God for the big things in my life. But it has been equally easy for me to overlook His generosity in the common things.

For instance, I have easily overlooked the most familiar thing in my life, something I've had literally for a lifetime—my body. It is always with me. Do I take anything more for granted than my body? I doubt it.

Yet Rabbi Harold Kushner in his book *Who Needs God* clearly shows us how important it is for us to acknowledge God's generosity in giving us wholeness in mind and body. Kushner writes: "The first five minutes of a Jewish daily morning service contain blessings in which I thank God for the fact that:

"My mind works and I know it is morning, my eyes work, my arms and legs function, my spinal column works and I can stand upright, I have clothes to wear, I have things to look forward to during the day.

"Without these prescribed blessings, it might not occur to me to be grateful for all those things."

### Unusual thanksgiving

Matthew Henry, the famous Bible scholar, was once accosted by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary:

"Let me be thankful first because I've never been robbed before; second, although they took my purse they did not take my life; third, because, although they took it all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed."

—From *The Complete Speakers Sourcebook* by Eleanor Doan

Until I read those words, I don't think I had ever thanked God for eyes, ears, nose, and mouth that work. I certainly never looked over the var-



ious parts of my body and expressed thanks to God for feet, toes, knees, and hips that operate properly.

The fact that I have fingers, wrists, elbows, and shoulders that function day after day, year after year, with virtually no maintenance is, in reality, an awesome miracle. Until I read Kushner's words, I gave my body hardly a thought, unless, of course, it was hurting.

More typically, I looked at my face and overall physique with little delight, never especially impressed by what I saw. But now I see me differently. Oh, sure, I still have thinning gray hair and I'm still battling the bulge. But I appreciate my body because it works, and I thank God often for such a remarkable treasure.

It isn't uncommon, however, to pretty much ignore one's body until pain indicates something has gone wrong. For instance, from time to time I have attacks of gout. They are excruciatingly painful, and when

I'm in the throes of an attack, I think about my foot a lot! When any part of my body becomes pain-filled, my attention is riveted on that pain. I waste no time in begging God to consider easing the torment.

On the other hand, when I have been gout free and without pain, I have virtually ignored my toes, feet, and other joints and have hardly seen them as anything special. They've simply been there.

Pondering Kushner's words, I can't be nonchalant about the gift of a body that works fabulously well and is pain-free most of the time. "Gratitude does not come naturally to most people," notes Kushner. "We tend to assume we are entitled to all the good things in life just for being the nice people we are."

It takes only a few seconds to thank God first thing each day for a mind and a body that work. For me it is a way to celebrate God, celebrate life, and celebrate the wondrous gifts that God has given me for a lifetime. I have a body and a mind that work well—not necessarily painlessly or perfectly—but precisely as He designed them specifically for me. [†]

*Mr. Bauman is a free-lance writer who lives in West Covina, Calif.*

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**The Women's Outlook Newsletter**  
is in the center of this issue.

## Rock Springs Church Holds Grand Opening Celebration

**R**OCK SPRINGS Community Church held a grand opening celebration in a new location on October 3, 1999. Rock Springs originally started public worship ser-



*The service opened with an interpretive dance that focused on Christ.*



*Approximately 135 people attended the Grand Opening celebration.*

VICES in September 1998 on the campus of National University. But the opportunity arose this past summer to meet at Carrillo Elementary School, which is located in the middle of a brand new planned community called Rancho Carrillo.

The school provides a much better facility for worship and ministry, so Rock Springs took advantage of the opportunity. Rancho Carrillo is located in Carlsbad, Calif., about 10 minutes from National University, where services were originally held.

Approximately 130-135 people worshiped together at the Grand Opening. About half of these were visiting Rock Springs for the first time. Several first-time guests said, "You won't be able to meet here for long. You're going to outgrow this building quickly."

The service featured up-tempo Christian worship music, an interpretive dance and drama, and special music from Stephanie Boyd—in addition to a message by Pastor Jim Boyd. Eight people made commitments to follow Christ after Pastor Boyd's message—five made first-



*Pastor Jim and Stephanie Boyd*

time confessions of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and three rededicated themselves to follow Him. [?]

—Rev. Reilly R. Smith

The move to a new location was not without hurdles. School officials were quite willing for the Rock Springs Church to use the school building. Soon, however, one of the teachers—apparently because of a bad experience she had had with a church that met in another school where she had taught—began to slander the idea of a church using the school.

Then just days before the grand opening the Rock Springs group was told that the city required the church to obtain a conditional use permit—at a cost of \$2,800—to use the school. Fortunately, the congregation was able to hold its Grand Opening before paying the fee. And the Midwest District has since given the Rock Springs Church \$3,000 to cover the fee!

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### Pontius' Puddle

ALL RIGHT, GOD, I'M FINALLY READY TO BARGAIN, SO...



YOU DO SOMETHING SPECTACULAR FOR ME, THEN I'LL SERVE YOU.



YOU MEAN BESIDES GIVE YOU LIFE, HEALTH, FOOD, SHELTER AND THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL SALVATION?

I CAN SEE THAT THIS IS GOING TO BE A TOUGH NEGOTIATION.



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# 15 Ways to Make Prayer a Natural Part of Your Family Life

By Kim Butts

## 1 Help your children become aware of answered prayer.

Tell them about the times in your life when God has answered your prayers. Encourage them to share when God answers their prayers—even if His answer isn't what they wanted or expected. When you have other believers—especially missionaries and full-time Christian workers—in your home, ask them to tell you about answered prayers they have experienced. Point out God's answers to your children's prayers, even the smallest requests.

## 2 Help your children see the beauty of God's creation and thank Him for it.

Don't miss opportunities to appreciate His handiwork around you. Take time to point out sunsets and beautiful flowers . . . and thank God for them right then.

## 3 Whenever you see or hear about someone in need, take time to pray about it with your children.

It could be something on the news or in the paper or something you come across during the course of your day. Teaching them to pray when they see an accident or when you pass a homeless person could have a lasting influence not only on your children, but also on those for whom they pray.

## 4 Wrap family traditions or events in special times of prayer.

For example, lay hands on the person with a birthday and bless him or her; thank the Lord for two things that you love about her; etc. At Thanksgiving, go around the table and have family members pray about what they are most thankful for over the past year.

## 5 Pray blessings over your children.

Lay hands on them at bedtime or at another time when they are hurting in some way and pray scriptural blessings over them. Numbers 6:24-26 is a good one to memorize: "The Lord bless you and

keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace."

## 6 Teach your children to pray—fully put on the armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18) at the beginning of each new day.

Each of us needs to be aware that we are in a battle and that God has provided us with some very important equipment with which to protect ourselves and fight. This can be done as a family, but don't ritualize it or make it a legalistic thing.

## 7 Have family devotions and prayer time.

While any time is good, early mornings before everyone goes separate ways is probably the best time. This will remind children that God will be with them throughout the day.

## 8 Put together a family prayer journal.

Place each family member's picture in it, as well as pictures of your pastor and his family, relatives, unsaved friends and neighbors. Pray through the album together, and encourage one another to pray individually every day for those represented.

## 9 Teach children to keep a personal prayer journal.

Here they can record personal requests, praises, and answers to prayer.

## 10 Develop a missionary prayer notebook.

Place prayer cards or pictures of missionaries your family and/or church supports in a 3-ring binder with plastic page protectors, colorful paper, etc. Include pages with pockets for recent newsletters, prayer needs, e-mail messages, etc. Pray through the notebook on a regular basis. Help your children make the connection between prayer and saving the lost. Pray together that the Lord of the harvest (Matt. 9:38) would send workers into His harvest fields.

## 11 Adopt a people group to pray for—

perhaps one of the unreached groups of the 10/40 Window.\* Pray for your people group daily, research its needs, and be open to what God will do through your family. To adopt a people group, contact Adopt-a-People Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 1795, Colorado Springs, CO 80901-1795. A wonderful video called *The 10/40 Window for Children* is available from Joey and Fawn Parish, 6673 Sort Street, Ventura, CA 93003.

## 12 Develop a family prayer calendar each month.

Take turns, or do it together. Put each family event or activity on the calendar so it can be prayed for. Wouldn't it be great to have the entire family pray for a child to do his best at the track meet or that Mom would meet someone who needed to hear about Jesus at her meeting?

## 13 Go on a prayer walk in your neighborhood.

Pray for all the families that live around you. For help on how to do this, obtain *Prayerwalking* by Steve Hawthorne and Graham Kendrick (Creation House) or the video *Prayerwalking for Kids*, available from Joey and Fawn Parish.

## 14 Adopt a leader to pray for.

The objective of the National Day of Prayer Task Force program is to have families adopt a local, state or national political leader. The family commits to pray for and communicate with this leader for at least one year. Kits are available from NDP at 800-444-8828.

## 15 Participate as a family in prayer events.

Join with other believers for the National Day of Prayer (first Thursday in May), PrayUSA!, Praying Through the Window, March for Jesus, etc. Encourage your junior- or senior-high school children to take part in See You at the Pole. [†]

*Mrs. Butts works with her husband Dave in directing Harvest Prayer Ministries in Brazil, Ind. (812-443-5800). Reprinted with permission.*

\*The 10/40 window refers to the area from 10 degrees to 40 degrees north of the equator and from western Africa to eastern Asia, where the majority of the unreached people of our world live.

# Reflections on a Ministry Trip to Lima, Peru

By Kenneth and Carolyn Solomon\*

*\*Though written in the third person, the information in the following article was taken from a journal the Solomons kept of their visit to Lima. Comments in quotation marks were taken directly from the journal. While basically a report of the Solomons' visit, the article also gives insight into the ministry of the Antunez family, our Brethren missionaries in Peru.*

**F**ORMER Brethren missionaries Kenneth and Carolyn Solomon spent three weeks in August and September in Lima, Peru, visiting Brethren missionaries Miguel and Sonia Antunez and son Carlos. The Antunezes had invited the Solomons to Lima to participate in the eighth anniversary celebration of the founding of The Brethren Church in Peru. It was also an opportunity for the Solomons to spend time with Miguel and Sonia, Ken's spiritual children, whom he won to the Lord when they lived in Sarasota, Fla., several years ago.

The Solomons arrived in Lima on August 26. One of their first impressions of the city was the traffic, which they found to be "SCARY." "Miguel told us the lines and arrows and traffic lights were for decoration only, and we believe him! They just use their horn and go. Ken told Miguel that if he was not talking, it was because he was praying. We are thankful for safety and will pray much for Miguel driving in that traffic."

## The celebration

The eighth anniversary celebration began on Saturday evening, August 28. "The people had worked very hard to prepare for this. They painted the inside of the church, as well as the outside, put up new curtains, borrowed chairs, and prepared a carry-in meal for after the service. . . . Their worship team led in several choruses, and some gave

testimonies. One man shared how the Lord changed his life out of alcohol, drugs, adultery, etc., and has given him victory over these things, restored him to his family, and is now continuing in his spiritual walk with the Lord. A lady also shared how God is changing her life and giving her patience to be a testimony before her alcoholic husband."

Ken gave the message for the service. "After a closing song, they prepared the very cramped quarters to serve the meal. . . . Ken is rejoicing as he sees and hears how the Lord has kept Miguel and Sonia and Carlos through many trials and testings and has blessed them in spite of and because of them."

## More celebration

The celebration continued on Sunday evening, August 29, with a time of singing and another message by Ken, who gave a very brief overview of Brethren Church history from the time of the Reformation

*Pastor Miguel Antunez (L.) and Rev. Ken Solomon in front of the Brethren Church building in Lima, Peru. The congregation needs more space and is investigating various possibilities for obtaining it.*

to now. "After the service we all went outside for a fireworks display that had been placed on the roof of the church—quite impressive! Back inside we all enjoyed some of the beautifully decorated cake, made especially for the occasion.

"The weekend [was] very exciting and rewarding—God has blessed. We pray that the work will continue to grow as the people accept their responsibilities before the Lord in the ministry of the church. They do need more space. Pray that this will become a reality. The possibilities are being investigated."



Ken and Carolyn Solomon

## English teachers

Miguel, Sonia, and Carlos all three teach English — Sonia in a Baptist school, Miguel and Carlos at a school they supervise for teaching English to anyone who wants to learn.

On August 31 the Solomons visited Sonia's school, and Ken spoke at the chapel service. They then toured the school, visiting classes and talking with the students in English to give them help with conversation. One class of boys was learning to cook, and they served the Solomons lunch before they left the school.

That evening they went to the church for Bible study. Two classes met, one taught by Miguel for newer converts, and one by his assistant—



Machi—for others. About a dozen people attended each class. "These discipleship classes are so important to the future of the church. One man travels two hours to attend. Maybe his area would be a possibility for a new Bible study class."

The following day, Miguel took the Solomons to the center of Lima. They found the city to be "both clean and dirty—clean in that they sweep and pick up trash, and dirty in that since it never rains, the pollution and gray dust never get washed away. The flowers and gardens are pretty (the roses are especially beautiful), but this gray dust is on the leaves of trees, where it cannot be washed off."

That evening Carolyn attended the ladies' meeting and gave the devotional. In all, nine women were present. They asked her to return the following week to tell about W.M.S. groups in the United States. For Carolyn, it was "a joy to be with these dear sisters in Christ."

The following day, the Solomons "were able to have a time of fellowship with Carlos [during which] he shared with us how the Lord has brought him through some very difficult times. He is seeking the Lord's will for his life and future,



During the church retreat, Pastor Miguel Antunez (r.) baptized three people.

so please pray for him."

The Solomons also participated in a weekend retreat held September 4-5 by the Brethren congregation in Lima. It took place about an hour from the city at "a lovely retreat area" with "dormitory-type accommodations, swimming pools, soccer fields, horses, a dining room, conference room, and large grass areas for use." Forty-one members of the congregation were able to attend.

"Times of singing, Bible study, recreation, games, food, fellowship, and free time were enjoyed by all." Miguel baptized two women and one man, using one of the swimming pools. The oldest daughter of the man baptized was saved during the morning service. Now the congregation is praying for the man's wife to

be saved. This retreat was a first for the congregation, and they are already planning for one next year.

A few days later the Solomons toured the Basilica, a large Roman Catholic Church in the center of Lima. Built in 1762, it has "very high ceilings, lots of statues, mostly of the Virgin Mary, 14k-gold covering many things, a lot of black cedar wood, very intricately carved. All so interesting to look at, but the people's

hearts are as hollow as the sound of the footsteps on the stone floor. We pray that the Gospel message will penetrate the hearts of these 11 million people in the city of Lima."

They also visited the Interdenominational Seminary where Miguel has been studying. The seminary "has a lovely facility and 50 students at present."

The Solomons' last Saturday in Lima (September 11) was Ken's 73rd birthday. Carolyn planned to have a small celebration at the house, but the Antunezes and the church people had other ideas. They gave a party complete with games, gifts, balloons, streamers, singing, food, a cake, Pooh Bear hats, and a Pooh Bear piñata. Ken said that in his entire life he had never had such a party before!

The Solomons left Lima September 15, returning to Bradenton, Fla. "The experiences we had and the ministry opportunities were very rewarding, and we are so grateful to the Lord for making it all possible. May He receive the honor and glory!

"It was a joy to see Miguel and Sonia 'in action' and how the Lord is using them and the gifts He has given them. They are greatly loved by the people and have many outreach opportunities. Their vision is expanding to the congregation. We pray that the Lord will greatly bless the ministry there. We solicit your prayers on their behalf. The evil one is at work, but God is greater!" [¶]

## Quiet Hearts

By Tim Hansel

*The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever (Isaiah 32:17).*

AS LONG as we are busy, busy, busy, we never have to face what is really important in life. We never have to find out who God really is. We simply follow the God we have underlined in the Bible—not the God who is, but the God we want Him to be. All we have to do

is carefully ignore anything in Scripture that doesn't meet our specifications of God—and never spend time alone with Him. We can be busy at work, busy at home, and busy at church. All work equally well at helping us ignore God as He really is.

Solitude is a flower born of simplicity. It needs to be tended slowly and patiently. A quiet heart never comes easy, never in a hurry. [¶]

*From Keep On Dancin': Daily Readings to Celebrate Life by Tim Hansel, Chariot Victor Publishing. Used by permission.*

## Accenting an Individual at Ashland University

The following article is an interview between Dr. Michael Gleason, Director of Religious Life at Ashland University, and Aubrey DeVeny, a new Brethren student at the University. The purpose of this article is to introduce Aubrey and to share her perspectives on Ashland University and her opportunities for Christian growth on the AU campus.

**Dr. Gleason:** Aubrey, why don't you start by introducing yourself and by telling how you came to decide on Ashland University.

**Aubrey:** My name is Aubrey Ann DeVeny. My father is pastor of the Northgate Community Brethren Church in Manteca, Calif., and my mother is supportive of his ministry. I'm the youngest of three children. My father, prior to taking a pastorate in California, was a chaplain in the military, so we had the chance to travel to many different places—which I loved.

I transferred to Ashland University from a Christian school in California, Azusa Pacific University. Prior to attending Azusa, I went to Taylor University in Indiana. So AU is my third school in three years.

I decided to transfer for a number of reasons. One is because I wanted the experience of attending a secular school. I felt that I had received a quality knowledge base at the previous two colleges I had attended, but I thought that applying that in a place that is not distinctly Christian would benefit my spiritual growth.

I also missed the greenery and seasons that Ohio has to offer. In comparison to California's warmth and concrete, Ohio's environment has become quite enticing. Furthermore, my grandfather on my dad's side lives in Ashland, so I was excited about the opportunity to develop my relationship with him.

**Dr. Gleason:** Now that you're getting into the school year, how do you feel that you've developed as a believer thus far?

**Aubrey:** The Christian Ministry clubs and staff have been really

helpful to me during this transition time. You, yourself, have repeatedly said that your door would always be open if I need to speak with you about anything. I've had the opportunity to get to know several of the staff members better, specifically Heather and Jennifer, and they have been encouraging as well as offering themselves to me in a fun friendship. Other students who attend the various Christian activities,



Aubrey DeVeny

like FCA or H O P E, have embraced me as well. It's neat to have a cushion of people of similar faith as I try to minister to those around me who don't know Jesus. With regard to witnessing, I would say I've definitely been challenged. While attending the Christian schools before, I would just assume that those in my classes had a relationship with Jesus. I can't make that assumption here.

I'm having to gain perspectives on how to approach others in a way that I can represent my relationship with Christ accurately. I don't want to come off as a "Bible-beater," but I do want to stand up for my faith when the opportunity arises. I'm striving to gain a balance that will enable me to be effective in my interaction with others. On the other hand, whenever I become too analytical about this, I remember that the main key is surrendering daily to the Holy Spirit and allowing Him to work through me. I just need to be sensitive and understand that He's the one doing the work.

**Dr. Gleason:** What are some other challenges that you have become aware of in coming to AU?

**Aubrey:** It's hard not to be self-involved. I really want to have other people on my mind more than my own concerns. I know ultimately I'll be more content that way. I also want to be able to live in the now. I think it's so easy to have expectations about the future or to think, "Oh, I'll be happy when I finally..." I know God wants to use me now in whatever mood or location I'm in.

**Dr. Gleason:** Speaking of the future, what are your dreams for yourself and for ministry?

**Aubrey:** For ministry, I can honestly say that I want to be where God wants me to be. But I do have a vision for where I think He might want me. But as soon as I say that, I generally discover that He actually knows a lot more about me than I know about myself. Anyhow, I'm majoring in social work and art, and I plan to do art therapy in graduate school. But I've also thought about going to seminary and learning Greek so that I can get into some "nitty-gritty" exegetical work.

I've also thought about missions and living overseas, or possibly the military. Since I generally adapt well to new places and am generally outgoing, I think that I could be used effectively in either of those outlets. On a personal level, I have all the dreams that many girls have about marriage, comfort, and contentment. But I know that God doesn't often call us to these, so I daily surrender those desires so that His plans would be my plans and not vice versa.

**Dr. Gleason:** What things would you specifically like us to pray about for you?

**Aubrey:** I would definitely say my health. I was diagnosed with mononucleosis at the start of the summer, and I'm still battling that. Spiritually I would say that I need practice in being vulnerable. I sometimes feel that I need to portray an image of having everything together in order to be an effective witness. I need to be reminded that I can't attain perfection and that allowing other Christians to minister is important. As to how that connects to witnessing, people need to see that it's Jesus in me being strong and forgiving me, not me doing something in my own human strength. [¶]



## The Unique Ministry of World Relief

By Bruce Sexton

“WORLD RELIEF doesn’t exist to help the poor in Jesus’ name.” These words of Clive Calver, as he addressed the 1998 General Conference of The Brethren Church, startled me. Surely, our new president at World Relief misstated our mission—and to a denomination that has a rich heritage of caring for the poor.

“World Relief doesn’t exist to help the poor in the name of Jesus,” Clive continued. “It exists to help the churches where they are to serve the poor in the name of Jesus.” This clarification was right on the mark. It not only defined the uniqueness of our ministry, it also revealed the reason for the effectiveness of our ministry over the years.

While serving with World Relief, I have been challenged to live my life in light of the three things that really matter: God, His Word, and people. The ministry of World Relief is about this call to people, most particularly, the world’s poorest people,

who often suffer in ways that are so atrocious we push them from our minds. But Jesus loves them—and



Rev. Bruce Sexton is Mid-Atlantic Regional Director of Church Relations for World Relief.

with His compassion and grace we must love and care for them too. Having served as a pastor for several years, I get excited about the emphasis World Relief places on local church involvement. While we applaud other agencies that serve the poor and hungry in Jesus’ name, our role at World Relief is different. We are committed to making the local church the foundation for our relief and development work, refugee care, church planting, and gospel witness. In this way, those who

are reached can be drawn into the church’s nurture and fellowship.

When a community in Mozambique reports that “our children are dying of insects,” a secular agency can teach the prevention and treatment of malaria just as well as World Relief. But when a local people believe disease is caused by a neighbor’s curse or a witch doctor, a complete cure involves a spiritual remedy. Enabling the local church to meet the physical needs of the poor and suffering results in powerful opportunities for the church to address the spiritual needs of the people as well.

The realization that so many of those in Sudan who were enduring war, famine, and persecution were fellow members of the body of Christ gave us a renewed vision for assisting the local church as we began relief efforts there. When the

**World Relief is churches helping churches help the poor in the name of Jesus.**

crisis in Kosovo hit, God’s church responded. Albania’s evangelical church may be few in number, but they began a staggering amount of work, aiding thousands of refugees who poured across their borders.

In country after country *the church* is feeding the hungry; *the church* is providing shelter; *the church* is leading development programs. And *the church* is the institution that will remain behind and minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the community long after World Relief’s ministry is done.

As we at World Relief commit ourselves to helping local churches serve as agents for change, living out Christ’s mercy and justice in the poorest communities around the world, we work in light of a promise. That promise is “the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:13–14, NIV). [✠]



World Relief President Clive Calver gives water to an 8-year-old orphaned Sudanese boy who walked ten miles in search of food. World Relief is helping the evangelical church in Sudan minister, through relief and development work, to needs like his.

## World Relief@Work in Sudan, Turkey, and Kosovo

### Turkey

ON AUGUST 18, 1999, less than 24 hours after an earthquake devastated Izmit, Turkey, and the surrounding province, World Relief's Disaster Response staff arrived to do an assessment of the damaged area and to make contact with leaders of evangelical churches in the province. World Relief and



An elderly man in Turkey sits in the rubble of what was once his home.

Turkish evangelicals began immediately to distribute daily food rations and blankets to survivors living out in the open. Several medical disaster teams were also dispatched to the area to respond to critical medical needs of victims.

In Istanbul, leaders of the churches arranged a meeting with the Governor of Izmit. He endorsed their plan to erect a camp that would accommodate 4,000 people whose homes were destroyed by the earthquake.

Preparation of surface terrain for temporary lodging began shortly afterwards. Once the ground was ready, emergency latrines and shower facilities were assembled. In early October World Relief was working with the churches to set up 500 eight-person tents.

In upcoming months, World Relief will continue to set up commercially made units to house displaced families over the harsh and wet winter. These winterized units are insulated, have built-in interior and exterior lights, and can be stacked into apartment-type units if needed. The cost is approximately \$3,450 for each one-family unit.



The first of 500 tents erected in a tent city near Izmit, Turkey, to provide temporary housing for families made homeless by the earthquake. World Relief provided the tents and worked with the evangelical churches in Turkey in setting them up.

### Prayer requests for Turkey:

- For seeker-oriented services that have begun at the Izmit church in Turkey. Pray that the body of believers will have a spiritual impact on the community.
- That Christians in Turkey—a country of only 1,500 evangeli-

***Since August, Brethren churches and individuals have contributed \$24,000 to World Relief to help earthquake victims in Turkey. Thank you, Brethren, for your generous response!***

cal—will not get discouraged or be fearful of coming to the church.

- That those helping in the relief effort will work well together and that those who do not yet know the Lord will turn to Him in genuine faith and repentance.
- That World Relief will be able to raise the \$2.5 million needed to carry out its planned relief efforts in Turkey. This includes the continuing distribution of food and supplies, setting up the tent camp, and providing adequate shelter before winter arrives.

### Sudan

Southern Sudan continues to suffer from intermittent hunger and chronic health problems due to the prolonged civil war and tribal fighting. These problems have been exacerbated by floods, which have destroyed hundreds of acres of cropland and livestock. Thousands of people are now homeless, searching for food and suffering from diseases such as malaria, diarrhea, and pneumonia.

World Relief and area churches are serving in the areas of Pochalla and Lietnham. These communities have no access to any market and have lost almost everything of any practical use. The hope is to improve food security and to alleviate suffering among the members of the community.

World Relief has held workshops to introduce new crops and to demonstrate improved methods of farming. Model farms using updat-



ed techniques are operating near the compounds. In addition, 21 varieties of seed have been distributed for planting. These seeds will produce a variety of crops and provide a balanced diet.

World Relief is also continuing to encourage education. Current lessons include water safety, food hygiene and nutrition. Future plans include promoting physical recreation and the construction of more schools.

### Prayer requests for Sudan:

- For continued training and education for church leaders in Sudan.
- For the safe resettlement of people who are returning to their war-torn homes in Sudan.

### I Believe in World Relief By Reilly Smith

I HAVE BEEN a long-time advocate for the ministries of World Relief. I first learned about World Relief while studying at Ashland Theological Seminary and attending the Garber Brethren Church in Ashland. We filled our *Skip a Lunch, Feed a Bunch* lunch boxes with spare change every night at our dining room table. We participated in sack lunch and soup lunch events at General Conference. We heard the stories, saw the pictures, and accepted the challenges from Pastors Phil Lersch and Marlin McCann. Later, I worked on the Social Responsibilities Commission with Pastors Harold Walton, Tim Garner, and others to help promote the work of World Relief.

When I served as pastor of the Mulvane, Kans., Brethren Church, our congregation worked very hard to increase its giving. We used the promotional materials every year. We showed the videos during Sunday school openings or morning worship. One summer, we taught the World Relief curriculum *Feed my People* in Sunday school to all age groups. (*Feed my People* is available free from Missionary Ministries at the National Office.) We even used World Vision's *Love Loaves* at a time different from the World Relief promotion to help in-

- For strength for the church in Sudan, which continues to be heavily persecuted by the Muslim government. Pray for peace in this civil conflict that has raged for years.

### Kosovo

Providing trauma counseling and housing for widows is the main focus of World Relief's ministry in Kosovo, as refugees in Albania return to their homeland. World Relief's efforts will be centered on Pec, Kosovo, a town that experienced some of the worst destruction of anywhere in Kosovo.

World Relief chose this region for its work because of the vision of Albania's evangelical churches. After

crease our giving. (World Vision encourages churches to split Love Loaf offerings with other ministries.) *I believe in the ministry of World Relief.*

In 1998 and 1999, Brethren people and churches responded generously to both the special disaster appeals and the on-going ministries of World Relief. God stirred our hearts when natural and man-made disasters wrought human tragedies. The leaders of The Brethren Church and World Relief are very grateful. The generous responses to Sudan, Honduras (hurricane Mitch), Colombia, Kosovo, and Turkey deeply moved us. We pray that the Brethren response to World Relief emphasis month will be equally generous. We've supported World Relief well, but I believe we can do even better.

During November, we Brethren have a unique opportunity to double our giving effectiveness. *Any gifts for World Relief in November that are designated for Southern Sudan will be matched by a grant from a Christian foundation.* That gift will double the funds needed in Southern Sudan and free other funds to be used elsewhere—Kosovo, Turkey, Taiwan, East Timor, or wherever needed. Please consider designating all or a portion of your World Relief gifts in November for Sudan by marking the memo section of your check. [✕]

*Rev. Smith serves as Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church.*

***During November, any contribution you make to World Relief that you designate for Southern Sudan will be matched by a grant from a Christian foundation, thus doubling the value of your gift.***

providing physical and emotional help to thousands of refugees with aid from World Relief, Albania's churches declared they would return to Kosovo with the refugees and the Gospel and continue to aid the people. Many of the refugees were from the region of Pec.

With World Relief providing funds, technical expertise, and managerial staff, and the Albanian churches providing the vision and volunteers, World Relief has launched a housing reconstruction program and support groups for traumatized women, mostly widows. In time these support groups will also help women, especially widows, develop sources of income for their splintered families.

In Pec, 90 percent of the homes were severely damaged and 40 percent were destroyed by the Serbians. Most families who returned have been living in tents. But with cold weather approaching, better housing is needed. Therefore, World Relief is racing to rebuild 100 homes before winter.

The long-term goal of the Albanian churches is to see churches planted in Kosovo. But at the moment, the focus is on helping the people survive the next few months.

### Prayer requests for Kosovo:

- That peace will be maintained in Kosovo so that relief and development work can continue and that the people can resume some semblance of a normal life.
- That the 100 houses will be completed in time for winter.
- That the Albanian church will be able to minister effectively to the emotional and physical needs of these widows.
- That strong churches will be planted in Kosovo that will bring many people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. [✕]



## In Memory

**Robert H. Dixon**, 70, pastor of the Center Chapel Brethren Church near Peru, Ind., died October 2 after falling from the roof of his home.

Dixon was born July 16, 1929, in Westpoint, Tenn., the son of Henry and Ruth Dixon. On February 6,



1958, he married Mildred Leoma Heater, who survives him. He served in the Army during the Korean War. He retired from GenCorp and was serving as full-time pastor

of the Center Chapel Church. He was a member of the Church of the Brethren in Mexico, Ind.

He is also survived by three children—Robert Lee Dixon, Linda McCauslin, and Martha Dunn, four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Services were held at Flowers-Leedy Funeral Home in Peru with Rev. Eldon Krider and Rev. Don Ritchey officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to the Center Chapel Brethren Church. [✝]

## Say "Thank you."

"Thanksgiving is probably the most neglected area of prayer. It is so human for us to ask and seek and knock. In our praying, we are often like little children who need to be taught how to say "Please" and "Thank you."

— Paul Cedar

# Doc Shank retires from pastoral ministry after fifty-four years of Christian service

**Edinburg, Va.** — After 54 years of ministry in The Brethren Church, the last 20 of them as pastor of the Liberty Brethren near Edinburg, Rev. Doc Shank retired from pastoral ministry at the end of June.

A farewell dinner was held July 18 by the Liberty congregation for Rev. Shank and his wife Jean. During the dinner, the congregation presented Doc a plaque that reads, "Presented to Doc Shank in appreciation for 26 years of faithful service as Pastor of the Liberty Brethren Church" (in addition to his past 20 years at Liberty, Rev. Shank also served the church from 1967 to 73). Since the farewell dinner was held just two days after Doc's 78th birthday, a lovely and delicious birthday cake was served during the meal.

The congregation also gave a lovely basket of flowers to Jean Shank. During her husband's ministry at Liberty, Jean helped in various ways. Each Sunday she gave a brief minister sermon, and on Sundays when Doc was elsewhere preaching, she would sometimes fill the pulpit.

A graduate of both Ashland College (BA, 1948) and Ashland Theological Seminary (BD, 1962; MDiv, 1973), Doc began preaching while a student at the college, serving the Glenford, Ohio, Brethren Church as student pastor from 1945-50. He was ordained at the Hagerstown, Md., First Brethren Church in 1953.

Jean (Heck) attended nurses training at Union Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Baltimore, Md., becoming a registered nurse in 1948. She then attended Ashland College, serving as school nurse while earning both BS and BA degrees (1952). The Shanks were married that same year, then went to the School of Missions at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis,



*Of his 54 years of ministry, Rev. Doc Shank and his wife Jean spent 26 years serving the Liberty Brethren Church.*

Missouri, for graduate work.

From 1955 to 1966 the Shanks served as Brethren missionaries on the Church of the Brethren mission field in Nigeria. They first taught at Waka School, but later were given oversight of mission work first in the Wandali area, then in the Marama area. They spent their last four years in Nigeria in Jos, where they served as house parents at Hillcrest School and where Doc was purchasing agent for the mission.

After returning to the U.S., Jean became a full-time nurse and Doc returned to the pastoral ministry. Brethren churches served in addition to Liberty were Maurertown, Va. (1966-73); St. Luke (Woodstock, Va.) (1967-73); Gretna (Bellefontaine, Ohio) (1973-77); Herndon (Chandon, Va.) (1977-79); and Mathias, W. Va. (1979-87). During his years of pastoral service he also had an active ministry as a volunteer hospital chaplain, most recently as Chaplaincy Coordinator at Shenandoah County Memorial Hospital, Woodstock, Va.

Though retired, Doc plans to continue his volunteer chaplaincy work at Shenandoah Hospital and to do some part-time pastoral work. He is currently preaching one Sunday a month at the Bethlehem Brethren Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

The Shanks are the parents of two children, Dennis Glenn Shank of Edinburg, Va., and Donna Jean Quinones of Tampa, Fla. [✝]

## Logans see potential, ask for prayer as they begin working with church in Rouen, France

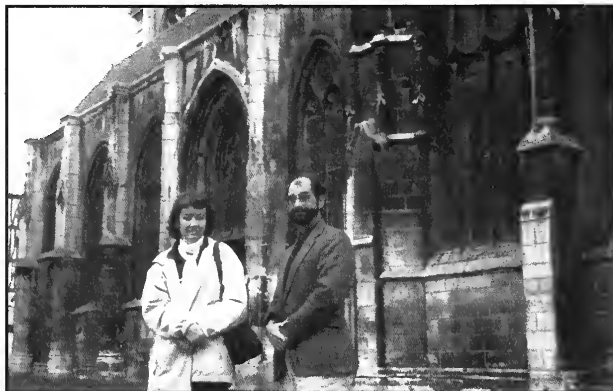
**Rouen (Normandy), France** — On Sunday, September 12, Brethren missionaries Mark and Chantal Logan were introduced to the congregation of the Reformed Church of France in Rouen as Parish Assistant and wife, marking the official beginning of their work with that church. On that day Rev. Logan wrote, "We are meeting people and learning about the church and what my job will be." He also noted that they were "being treated very well."

When the Logans first arrived in Rouen (a city of approximately 500,000), the remodeling of the apartment in which they were to live was not yet finished, so they stayed with the pastor and his wife. But by the second week of October they had moved into the apartment and were beginning to get settled.

According to Mark, the Reformed

Church in Rouen is made up of two congregations that share three buildings. The largest is St. Eloi, the

*Chantal and Mark Logan beside St. Eloi, one of the three church buildings of the Reformed Church in Rouen, France, which they are serving.*



downtown worship center, which was built as a Roman Catholic

cathedral in the 16th century but was given to the Protestants by Napoleon in 1803. It suffered only minor damage during the World War II invasion of Normandy, while the Joan of Arc Catholic Church, only 100 yards away, was completely destroyed.

The second church building is smaller, seating about 80. The third is the Parish House, which is about a 5-minute walk from the main building downtown. It is the center for many of the church activities and has a kitchen, a large room with a small stage, several meeting/class rooms, and a catacomb-like basement for the Scouts. The Parish House is built around a courtyard that also includes three apartments, one for each of the two pastors and one for the Logans.

Mark believes that the church has a lot of potential. It has had a fruitful past but has grown a bit complacent over the years. Now, however, it seems to be waking up and becoming aware of the graying of the congregation. New evangelistic activities are being planned and a major refurbishing of the Parish House is in progress. "We consider it a privilege to be here and take part in the renewal effort," he said. "Please pray for God's guidance and the presence of His Spirit here." [✠]

## A Weekend Escape

**Lakeville, Ohio** — Approximately 35 Brethren families in Ohio took time out from their fast-paced world to relax and enjoy the beauty of God's creation at the Ohio District's Camp Bethany on Labor Day weekend. They left behind TV's, phones, stereos, and the everyday tasks of life to enjoy a weekend rendezvous with God, families, and friends. The result was a Spirit- and fun-filled weekend that will be remembered for a long time.

One of the weekend's highlights was a concert by David Greer, an Ashland resident who heads a youth program called New Creation Ministries. Greer

The speaker for the weekend was Art Carr, associate pastor at the Smithville, Ohio, Brethren Church, who led four sessions on the topic "How Does the Media Affect Us?" He explained how the media can infiltrate our thinking and influence us toward a secular viewpoint. He countered this with some great guidelines on how to keep the media out of our lives.

"We praise our Heavenly Father for the blessing that Family Camp was to all," said Tom and Diane McConahay, who directed the program, "and we hope to see you next year, September 2-4, 2000. What a great way to spend the first Labor Day of the new millennium."

— reported by the McConahays



## Donald Belstering ordained a Brethren elder October 10 at Park Street Brethren Church

**Ashland, Ohio** — Donald L. Belsterling was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and his wife Jeanine was consecrated as the wife of an elder in a service held Sunday evening, October 10, at Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, where Rev. Belsterling serves as Pastor of Youth Discipleship.

Dr. Arden Gilmer, senior pastor of



*Rev. Don and Jeanine Belsterling and their children—  
(l. to r.) Hannah, Abigail, and Boaz.*

the Park Street congregation, led the service and gave the message. He noted that approximately 200 youth are involved in some kind of youth activity at Park Street Brethren Church each week. Other Brethren elders participating in the service were Robert Buford, associate pastor at Park Street Church, Leroy Solomon, John Shultz, Ronald W. Waters, and Dale Stoffer. The action of the congregation calling for the ordination of Belsterling was read by Moderator Jim Hess, who also expressed words of appreciation for the ministry of Don and Jeanine.

Because it was the youth pastor who was being ordained, a number of young people participated in the service. They helped the worship team lead the congregation in a time of worship through singing, and then, with the worship team, presented special music, singing "All Things Are Possible." Two young men, Andy Ditlevson and Mark Pepsmy, then told what the ministry of

Pastor Belsterling has meant to them.

Donald Belsterling was born June 12, 1963, in Pittsburgh, Pa., the son of Edward and Elfriede Belsterling. He was graduated from Mt. Lebanon, Pa., High School and attended Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pa., receiving a BA degree in communications in 1985. He accepted a position with May Company as a

buying executive, and while working there volunteered as a youth worker in his home church.

Two years after graduating from college, he felt a call to full-time Christian ministry, and he moved to Greenville, Pa., to minister to youth and college students in a

church there. While in Greenville, he met Jeanine Sherbondy of Atlanta, Pa., at a community outreach meeting for the Billy Graham Association. Two years later she became his wife.

In 1990 the Belsterlings moved to Greeley, Colo., where Don became youth director in a church there. While in Greeley, in 1992, their first child, Hannah, was born.

Throughout these years of service, Don was earning seminary credits from the Gordon Conwell and Denver Seminaries. Then in 1994 the Belsterlings moved to Ashland so that Don could attend Ashland Theological Seminary full time. In January 1995 he became Pastor of Youth Discipleship at Park Street Church, where he has served for the past five years. In May 1997 he received his Master of Divinity degree from the seminary.

Since moving to Ashland, the Belsterlings have been blessed with two more children, Abigail, born in 1995, and Boaz, born August 5, 1999. [†]



**Lanark, III** — Rev. Robert L. Schubert, associate pastor of the Lanark First Brethren Church, and his bride, Joyce (Wolf), were honored at a reception August 29 hosted by the Lanark congregation. The two were married on August 18, 1999, at The Little Brown Church in Nashua, Iowa. Rev. Schubert's first wife, Mayme, died July 3, 1998.

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# The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 121, No. 11

A newsletter for Brethren people

December 1999

## A Look at Where We Have Been

By Dale Stoffer

As we come to the end of the 20th century and prepare to enter not just a new century but also a new millennium, it is appropriate that we first take a look backward and evaluate where we have been. To that end, the following overview of the history of The Brethren Church since its founding in 1883 will look at some of the significant developments that have brought us to where we are today.

### Background

The Brethren Church began as a result of a three-way division that occurred among the Brethren in the early 1880s. To understand that division, however, we need to go back another 175 years.

The Brethren movement began in Germany in 1708. By the early 1730s, persecution and harsh economic conditions in Europe caused most of the adherents of this group to come to America. In this country the Brethren, because of their German language and their tendency to form agrarian settlements on the frontier, became a subculture in American society. This is reflected by their name, the German Baptist Brethren.

By 1850, however, the Brethren were being forced to come to terms with the dominant American cul-

ture. They began to adopt English as their primary language, and their rural settlements increasingly interacted with the surrounding society.

Over the next 30 years, in response to the challenges posed by acculturation, three distinct groups developed among the German Baptist Brethren. One group, the Old Order Brethren, wanted strict adherence to the traditional ways of the church, the "old order." They opposed all new religious practices (Sunday schools, revivals, Christian schools, a paid ministry).

On the opposite side were the Progressive Brethren. They thought the church needed to accept these and other modern advances if it was to have any significant outreach into wider American society. In the middle were the Conservatives, who were willing to accept change but who insisted that it be slow so as not to disrupt the unity of the church.

### Three-way division

The tension among these three positions led to a three-way division among the German Baptist Brethren between 1881 and 1883. The Old Order Brethren withdrew, forming the Old German Baptist Brethren. The Progressive Brethren, guided especially by Henry R. Holsinger, were disfellowshipped from the main body of the church and in 1883 formed The Brethren Church. The group that remained—the Conservatives who were the vast majority of the German Baptist Brethren—adopted the name Church of the Brethren in 1908.

The controversy of the 1870s and 80s had both positive and negative influences on The Brethren Church,

the heirs of the Progressive position. On the positive side, many of the practices advocated by the Progressives have continued to be important for The Brethren Church.



Elder Henry R. Holsinger, leader of the Progressive Brethren.

These include Christian education through Sunday schools; higher education (Ashland College, founded by Brethren in 1878, came under the control of the Progressives at the time of the division); an educated and salaried ministry; evangelism in the wider American culture, especially urban centers; and foreign missions.

On the negative side, The Brethren Church had a strong fear of any kind of central authority in the church due to the perception of Progressives that the Annual Meeting of the German Baptist Brethren had held too much authority. This fear of central authority led to several disturbing developments in the

(continued on next page)

### This Christmas, take A Journey to the Manger

See the middle of this issue (pages 6 and 7) for daily devotional readings for December 21 to 25 that will help you prepare your heart for Christmas.

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church during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

1. Many newly-organized churches died because no organized effort existed to supply pastors for these new congregations.
2. Ashland College and the Brethren Publishing Company were nearly lost because the church failed to adequately address their financial needs.
3. The church rebuffed every effort to define church government more fully. It was not until 1915 that *A Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church* was adopted. In this document, the concept of limited congregationalism was spelled out: Brethren churches are free to decide and oversee their own local affairs but are to hold a common faith and practice regarding gospel explicit and the ordinances of the church.

## Early successes

In spite of the hardships faced by the new church following the division of the 1880s, The Brethren Church made considerable headway in the last years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century. Three auxiliaries of the church were begun during this period. A women's work, the Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor (forerunner of the Women's Missionary Society), started in 1887. A denominational youth ministry was organized in 1890. Then two years later, the National Ministerial Association was formed. (The laymen did not organize until 1923.)

In time, Ashland College gained a firmer financial footing through the very capable leadership of Dr. J. Allen Miller, who served as president of the institution from 1898

*Dr. J. Allen Miller, president of Ashland College from 1898 to 1906 and dean of Ashland Theological Seminary from 1906 to 1933, was a dominant figure in The Brethren Church throughout his lifetime.*



until 1906. In 1906 he resigned to become dean of the newly-organized seminary.

A Foreign Mission Society was begun in 1900, although outside the formal structure of General Conference. In 1908 the society authorized Charles F. and Pearl Yoder to serve in Argentina as the church's first foreign missionaries. James and Florence Newberry Gribble began a second mission field for the Brethren in west-central Africa in 1918.

Home missions also moved forward as urban missions were started in Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Columbus, Canton, Chicago, St. Joseph, and Montreal. In addition, in 1905 George and Ada Drushal launched a ministry in Appalachia, the Riverside Institute at Lost Creek, Ky. Many of these mission efforts, both small-town and urban, bore fruit as The Brethren Church grew from about 6000 members in 1883 to more than 23,000 in 1915.

The Brethren Church was very open to involvement in the major Christian movements of the late 19th and early 20th century. The church developed ties with the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the YMCA, the YWCA, the Christian Endeavor movement, and similar organizations. In addition, individual Brethren came under the influence of liberalism and fundamentalism.

## Controversy

Between 1913 and 1921 the Brethren experienced intermittent controversy when a few well-educated Brethren began to embrace liberalism and the social gospel. This controversy was brought to an end in 1921 when the Ministerial

Association adopted a conservative statement of faith, *The Message of the Brethren Ministry*. As a result, those with liberal persuasions left the denomination during the 1920s.

Though the church as a whole was theologically conservative, some in the denomination, notably Louis Bauman and Alva J. McClain, wanted to steer the church into fundamentalism. By the 1930s, American fundamentalism had adopted a very aggressive stance toward anything deemed liberal and frowned on any association with those having liberal sentiments.

Bauman and McClain, fearing that liberalism was gaining a foothold at Ashland College, desired to turn the school into a Bible institute, similar to Wheaton College. They were opposed by the Ashland College trustees and many Brethren, who preferred to maintain a Christian liberal arts education at the institution.

## Division

Combined with the controversy over Ashland College were several theological issues plus the clash of strong personalities on both sides of the conflict. The most notable theological issues involved the understanding of "grace." On the one side were the fundamentalist Brethren, who held to the priority of God's grace alone in salvation (thus "Grace Brethren") and a consequent belief in eternal security.

On the other side were the "Ashland Brethren," who were committed to the traditional Brethren perspective that salvation involves confession of faith in Christ as both Savior and Lord, with the necessity of ongoing faithfulness and obedience to Christ. The result of this controversy was a division in 1939. The nearly 30,000 members divided almost equally between the two groups.

This division affected the Ashland Brethren far more adversely than the Grace Brethren. Though the Ashland Brethren retained most of the denominational institutions and organizations, the Foreign Missionary Society, as an independent agency, sided with the Grace Brethren. The Grace Brethren were also able to control the youth work and most of the home

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mission churches. In addition, most of the seminary students joined McClain when Grace Theological Seminary was formed in 1937, thus creating a pastoral shortage in The Brethren Church that would last well into the 1950s.

The disillusionment that set in following this division resulted in a period of nearly 20 years in The Brethren Church that Brethren historian Albert Ronk characterized as "defeatism, lethargy, gloom." Some Brethren entertained thoughts of joining the Church of the Brethren or of allowing the denomination to disintegrate. Fortunately, leaders both young and old committed themselves to rebuilding the church.

### Signs of life

Already in the 1940s some signs of life could be detected by the eyes of faith. Charles F. Yoder, who had retired from missionary service, returned to Argentina in 1940 to begin a new Brethren mission work there. Near the end of the decade (1948), the church expanded its mission program to Nigeria, in cooperation with an established work of the Church of the Brethren.



*Dr. Charles F. Yoder, who began Brethren mission work in Argentina twice, also served for a time as editor of The Brethren Evangelist.*

A facet of church life that Albert Ronk especially credited with breathing vitality back into the church was the youth program. In 1946 the first Brethren Youth Conference met, and in 1948 Charles Munson became the first National Director of Brethren Youth. In the 1950s the Crusader Program was launched, preparing young people for service to the church. This program, in various phases, has continued into the 90s.

Further signs of renewed life in the church in the 50s and 60s were an increasing number of new church starts (64 since 1950 with more than 50 percent still in existence)

### The Brethren Church at the End of the 20th Century.

(December 1998 statistics)

Membership	13,494
Average Sunday morning worship attendance	12,515
Total congregations	116
Established churches	109
Mission congregations	3
Classes	4

### Seven new congregations were started in 1998 and 1999.

- Cross Keys Worship Center, Port Republic, Va., May 17, 1998
- Iglesia de los Hermanos, Tucson, Ariz., June 28, 1998
- Grace Community Church, Winchester, Va., Sept. 27, 1998
- Rock Springs Community Church, Vista, Calif., Oct. 4, 1998
- Oasis Community Church, Chandler, Ariz., March 7, 1999
- Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship, Peru, Ind., March 21, 1999
- Living Waters Community Church, Mansfield, Ohio, Sept. 19, 1999

and a reawakening interest in the history and thought of the church. Especially important for the revitalization of the church has been the exciting growth of Ashland Theological Seminary.

When Joseph Shultz became dean in 1963, the seminary had only 22 students. Through his innovative leadership and that of his successor, Frederick Finks, the seminary has grown to 760 students. Though Brethren students make up only a small portion of the student body, the seminary has provided excellent training for many Brethren men and women who serve in every facet of the church's life.

### Critical self-evaluation

The mood of the church from 1975 to 1995 could be described as one of critical self-evaluation of its weaknesses, strengths, and mission. Reflecting this perspective was a long process of denominational reorganization, beginning in 1976 and culminating in 1996. The result has been a more streamlined, efficient organization with a far more unified vision for national ministry.

Another important step was the development of a mission statement for the denomination in 1988-89.

Then two planning conferences were held at Beulah Beach, Ohio. The first, in 1989, developed priorities for the denomination; the second, in 1992, focused on church planting. Also during this period a wide range of issues related to baptism, communion, and ordination were considered.

Not to be overlooked during the period from the 1970s to the early 1990s was the expansion of international mission work. Four new Brethren fields were opened in the 1970s—India in 1970, Colombia in 1973, Malaysia in 1974, and Mexico in 1979. In 1987 the church began a cooperative work with the Argentine Brethren Church in Paraguay. And in 1991 Brethren mission work was begun in Peru.

### A sense of excitement

The final years of the 1990s have witnessed a sense of anticipation and excitement for what the Lord will do with The Brethren Church. Though there is continuing concern over the drop in membership, down nearly 30 percent since 1957, worship attendance has actually grown more than 20 percent during the same period. Several exciting new church starts have led to increasing interest in home missions.

A series of spiritually moving General Conferences have Brethren sensing the Lord's presence and work in the church in new and profound ways. The realization that there are or shortly will be more Brethren worshipers overseas than in America has opened the eyes of the church to the wonderful movement of God in Asia and Central and South America.

When Alexander Mack, the founder of the Brethren movement in Germany, was asked about the future of the fledgling Brethren movement, he replied, "We cannot testify for our descendants—as their faith is, so shall be their outcome." As we stand at the threshold of a new millennium, perhaps the best prediction we can make about the future of The Brethren Church is: "Only faith will tell." [✠]

*Dr. Stoffer is Professor of Historical Theology at Ashland Theological Seminary and a Brethren historian.*



# An attitude adjustment for Christmas

By Larry R. Baker

**G**OD SPEAKS to us in various ways. Sometimes we hear Him in the quietness of our devotions or as we gaze upon a fantastic sunset. Other times He speaks through a passage of Scripture, the verse of a song, the last point of a sermon, or a feeling of peace in our hearts. God speaks, and we get the point.

It happened to me a few years ago while I was impatiently standing in a long line at a Target store during the pre-Christmas season. As the Muzak played "Jingle Bells," "Deck the Halls," and "Joy to the World," I was once again developing my Christmas Grinch attitude—mentally decrying the commercialism of the celebration of Jesus' birth. It was at this time that God got my attention—not audibly, but by challenging my attitude.

## Righteous indignation

I told God that I was being "righteously indignant" on His behalf because of all the commercialism and secularization of Christmas. He told me that He could handle any necessary righteous indignation Himself, and that I needed to prepare for Christmas in a much more joyful way. God even had the audacity to remind me of my calling and to suggest that it was my responsibility to help the members of the congregation I serve with their attitudes so that we could all become a blessing to the community.

God has a way of confirming His messages to us until we get the point. He keeps at us until we begin practicing our faith rather than just confining it to a mental com-

***If your attitude toward Christmas is sometimes "Bah, humbug," this article is for you.***

partment that doesn't make a hill-of-beans difference in the way we live. He confirmed His message to me during a Sunday school class, as I shared how God had dealt with me at the Target store.

"It's interesting that you should say that," replied one of the class members who managed a bookstore in the mall. "Christians are usually some of the rudest, most ill-mannered customers during the Christmas season."

There God was again, getting my attention—convicting me of the need to prepare myself and to help others prepare for Christmas. He was showing me that we need to make Christmas a proactive time of sharing the love and new life found in Christ rather than a reactive time of fussing and complaining about what the pagans are doing with the holiday. With God's help

and the assistance of many good people at First Brethren Church in South Bend and around the world, we have come up with a few ideas that help us prepare for Christmas in a more joy-filled and Spirit-filled way. I share them with you in hopes that they will help you in your Advent journey, as together we advance the Kingdom of God.

## Adjusting our focus

We discovered that we need to adjust our own focus as we prepare for Christmas. As a congregation we do that by observing Advent. We not only light the appropriate candle on the Advent wreath at the beginning of each worship service, we also ask someone from the congregation to share a prepared Advent thought for the day. In addition, the music, drama, Scripture reading, and message during the worship services all focus on helping people prepare for Jesus.

In addition to our Advent emphasis in our worship services, we also encourage each person to spend extra time personally preparing for Christmas. Some years we distribute Advent devotional booklets for members of the congregation to use and to share with friends. The copies for sharing with friends usually have an extra cover for mailing that includes an invitation to our special Christmas services. This year we are making our own devo-





tional booklet using ideas and meditations contributed by members of the congregation.

We also try to share the joy of the Christmas season with those around us—especially those in need and those who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. In order to do this, we plan some special programs and invite the community. A program that is always a hit is the Holiday Concert by our local male chorus, followed by that Brethren specialty—refreshments! children's programs, Christmas caroling, a Candle & Carol service, and the Christmas Eve service all provide opportunities to make Christmas special by including lots of people in the programs and by inviting people of the community to share in the real meaning of the holiday.

Another way we share Christmas joy is through "servant evangelism" projects in which the whole congregation can participate. We have

found that giving out pens (that say "Compliments of First Brethren Church") to busy store clerks provides a bright spot in their hectic holiday. We usually make tracts and calendars available for church people to enclose with their Christmas cards or just to give to friends and neighbors.

Some years we have made the Jesus video or specialty Bibles available at reduced prices for Christmas gifts. This year we hope to be able to pass out little packets of nuts with Dr. Terry Wardle's 1998 General Conference declaration, "God is nuts about you!" on them. We also encourage our Sunday school classes and Bible study groups to have a special project. Last year we shared Christmas gifts, groceries, and God's love with 15 children through Angel Tree.

We always give church members one or more ways to invite people to join us in our Christmas celebra-

tion. We have used the Advent devotional booklets, mentioned previously, and also Christmas cards. This year we plan to use some great little cards from Outreach Marketing that will invite people to "Hang Out" with us this Christmas.

Oh, I almost forgot to mention decorations. In addition to the traditional Chrismon Tree in the sanctuary with its symbols representing Jesus, we also have a poinsettia tree comprised of 40 to 50 plants. These poinsettias are then shared with shut-ins and the elderly.

There is also one tradition that we have observed for many years that helps remind all of us that Christmas is Jesus' birthday. We bring birthday presents for Jesus to our Candle & Carol service. Each year a list of suggested birthday gifts is published in our December newsletter, and corresponding paper ornaments are hung on the "giving tree" (a little Christmas tree in the lobby). Individuals or families select gifts that they want to give Jesus for His birthday.

The gifts represent a variety of ministries and interests within the Body of Christ—crayons for Sunday school, coffee for fellowship time, Bibles for new members, or support for missionaries. Last year Jesus especially needed a new copier. He was given a really good one, in addition to many other fine gifts!

God has also given me some personal ways that enable me to prepare for Christmas. Now instead of being upset by long lines, I talk to other people or I spend the time in prayer. I also look for ways to bring the joy of the Lord to someone else in unexpected ways. And more than once when I have done so, I have caught a glimpse of the face of Jesus.



## How to help the grieving through the holidays

FOR MOST PEOPLE, the Christmas season is a joyful time of celebration with family and friends. But for those who have lost a loved one during the year, the holidays can be an especially difficult time. Marianne LaFrance, social psychologist and professor at Boston College, offers the following suggestions for helping someone you care about deal with his or her grief at Christmastime.

- Give a gift of memories. A scrapbook filled with photos and other memorabilia of the departed, gathered from family and friends, will make a treasured and appreciated gift.
- Help your friend think about and decide which holiday traditions to keep and which ones to change. Sometimes it's good to change certain traditions so that the absence of a loved one is less painful. Suggest starting some new ones, such as attending a concert or joining a choral group for caroling.
- Plan an outing to the grave site. Take along a small pine tree, holly, an evergreen floral arrangement, or other greenery to decorate it for the season.
- For some, the loss of a loved one can leave them feeling less needed. Vol-

unteer at a local soup kitchen or children's hospital and invite the grieving person to go with you. Or take him or her shopping for food, clothing, or toys to give to a charity.

- Don't be afraid to mention the deceased person's name—it's important to reassure the bereaved that you haven't forget his or her loved one. Drop the person a note acknowledging that this is a difficult time, or encourage the grieving person to reminisce about favorite holiday memories with you.
- Christmas trees, lights, candles and other holiday decorations are often neglected in homes where someone has passed away. Consider sending the person a small tree, wreath or evergreen floral arrangement.
- Attend Christmas Eve service with the bereaved. Church communities provide a strong support network, and the service may be comforting to someone in grief.
- Encourage the bereaved to spend Christmas with you and your family. Many people who are grieving don't feel like celebrating, but being alone during the holidays can be even more difficult. Offer to bring the celebration to their home if they aren't ready to go out. [†]

— Provided courtesy of FTD professional florists

Rev. Baker is pastor of the South Bend, Ind., First Brethren Church.

# A Journey to the Manger

By Brian H. Moore

Seven daily devotional readings for the week leading up to Christmas

**December 19**

*Read Genesis 3:8-9*

**F**OR the next seven days we are going on a journey. The journey will lead us to the manger where the newborn baby Jesus was laid. It is a journey of the soul, a spiritual pilgrimage in which each of us will have opportunity to "ponder these things in our hearts" (Lk. 2:19).

A journey takes us from the familiar to the unfamiliar. It takes us away from home. To begin the journey, we must first consider where "home" is. I'm not thinking of our literal address, of course, the town and street where we live. Rather, I want us to consider the question the Lord God asked the man in the garden, "Where are you?"

Where are you in your life and spirit right now as you read these words? Are you tired? Are you weary? Are you in a hurry? Are you anxious? Are you afraid? Are you lonely? Do you feel overloaded? Do you feel deep peace and contentment? Are you excited? Are you, like Adam and Eve, trying to hide from God—and from others?

The God who is love and boundless compassion deeply desires to know where you are. Wherever you are, He is looking for you. He wants to invite you to come with Him on a journey to find anew His Son.

"Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee . . ." Where is your starting point for this journey? Take a few moments right now to search your soul to find out just where you are, for that is where the journey begins.

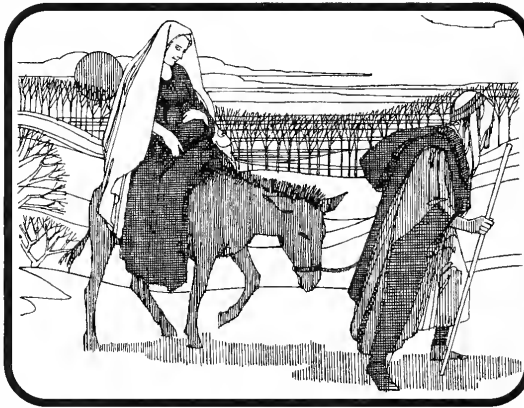
**December 20**

*Read Luke 2:1-4*

**A**JOURNEY is not always convenient. Sometimes forces outside ourselves require us to make the

pilgrimage. The journey is not a vacation trip. We may have some inner resistance. We may be deeply involved where we are and find it irritating to have to break the familiar routine.

For Joseph, the order came from "headquarters," from Rome, from Caesar Augustus. Nazareth was about 75 miles from Bethlehem. Under ordinary circumstances, perhaps Joseph could have made the trip to his ancestral home, taken



care of the business, and returned in just a few days. But this was no ordinary time! His wife was about to have a baby! Two deadlines were putting pressure on him: the deadline to register and the baby's due date! Talk about inconvenient!

The journey to the manger for us, unlike that for Joseph and Mary, is unforced. We don't have to go! We can stay in the arena of the familiar. We can hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign over the door of our hearts. Any of us can let this season come and go with nothing about our lives challenged or changed. Yesterday we considered where we are in life. Maybe we are content to stay there.

Let us take a moment right now to consider how open we are to the movement of the Spirit in our lives;

how pliable we are in the hands of the Heavenly Potter. Are we willing to lay aside the familiar, the routine, the comfortable, and take the risk of striking out on a new pilgrimage of faith?

**December 21**

*Read Luke 2:4*

**T**HINK of the significance of these words: "Because he was of the house and line of David." Suppose it had read, "Because he was of the house and line of Zebulun." If that had been the case, Joseph and Mary would not have needed to make the journey. They would have already been where they needed to be.

But no, Joseph was of the house and line of David. To belong to David meant that he had to pack up his expectant wife and make the trip. If he had been of the house and line of Zebulun, we would never have heard of him or Mary. The inconvenience was created by the blessing! The journey grew out of the call. Mary humbly

accepted the announcement that she would be the mother of the Messiah. That privilege created the necessity of the journey.

We are privileged people as well, "chosen in [Jesus Christ] before the creation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). In the master plan of God, that privilege necessitates a cooperative endeavor. If we had denied or rejected our call to know God in Jesus Christ, we would have the "privilege" of staying in the old life of sin and deadness. But because we are who we are in Christ, we now are called to move along in the journey that may sometimes take us where we don't want to go.

Take a moment right now to search your heart to determine if you have been seeking to live up to

your privileges of being chosen by God. Privilege has its price. Have you been willing to pay that price?

## December 22

Read Luke 2:5

**J**OSEPH had already made peace with Mary's situation (actually, God gave him that peace; see Matt. 1:18-25). But something still didn't seem quite right about these words: "... Mary, who was pledged to be married to him ... was expecting a child." Joseph, being a conscientious man, made the journey to Bethlehem with his wife-to-be who was pregnant, being fully aware of the social stigma this could bring.

To someone more self-centered, less godly, less at peace with God than Joseph was, Mary would have been viewed as "extra baggage." Such a man might have looked for a way to hide her or to leave her at home in order to escape the scorn of society. He might even have lied about her if the situation arose.

Some of us are like that. We are slow to make the journey to the manger because we demand perfection of ourselves. Everything has to be "just right." But somehow, life never seems to be "just right." If we are to go at all, we must go with what seem like handicaps, baggage. Our journey to Jesus must not wait until we have our "house in order."

Let us take a moment to consider what, if anything, we may be using as an excuse to hinder our progress in our spiritual growth. Is there something about ourselves we are trying to hide or to deny in order to appear more "together" than we really are? Bring the "extra baggage" along on the journey. We never know what God may do with it!

## December 23

Read Luke 2:7

**M**ARY still wasn't Joseph's wife! The baby came, and they weren't married (although "the pledge" in those days had marital-type commitment built into it). "Behold what God hath wrought!" He took what appeared to be a "sinful" situation and brought the world His Blessing. (Let's get this right: *there was no sin* in this, even though to unbelievers then and now, it *appears* to be scandalous.)

Joseph knew what God was up to. He knew that what was taking place was a miracle. He was not hindered or offended by these circumstances. Mary was not "extra baggage" to him! A great thing was taking place! God was taking what appeared to be a troublesome situation and bringing the Savior of the world into the world in the midst of it.

On our spiritual pilgrimage, we may have many things about us and our circumstances that do not



seem to be conducive to our progress. The challenge for us is to allow the Lord in His sovereignty to turn those things into sources of blessing. Consider your emotional makeup, your living condition, your economic situation, your "station" in life (age, physical condition, etc.). Do these seem like hindrances to the journey? Consider that they may be a "Mary," a channel of God's profound work in your life and even of His work in the world.

## December 24

Read Luke 2:8-16

**I**T looked as though it would be a lonely journey for Joseph and Mary. They apparently knew no one in Bethlehem, had no relatives there with whom they could stay. They sought public accommodations, but even these were not available. How lonely! How extremely lonely was this journey!

But suddenly the silence of the barnyard was broken by other voices. Other people were coming, all out of breath. Their breathing seemed louder than their muffled conversa-

tion. Someone else had been summoned to make the journey! In a way unknown to the parents, a birth announcement had been sent to some lowly shepherds. Of all people to be invited to the journey! And yet it was these very people and these kinds of people who respond to the call to come to the manger.

Take a few moments right now to consider these questions: Who is with me on this journey? Who is "with me" in heart and soul on my spiritual journey? Anyone? Can I find someone who would share the path with me? Or will I always have the feeling of being a stranger in a strange place? And then ask yourself, Do I have the shepherds' heart? Am I as eager as they were to come and bow before Him in simplicity and purity of heart?

## December 25

Read Luke 2:17-20

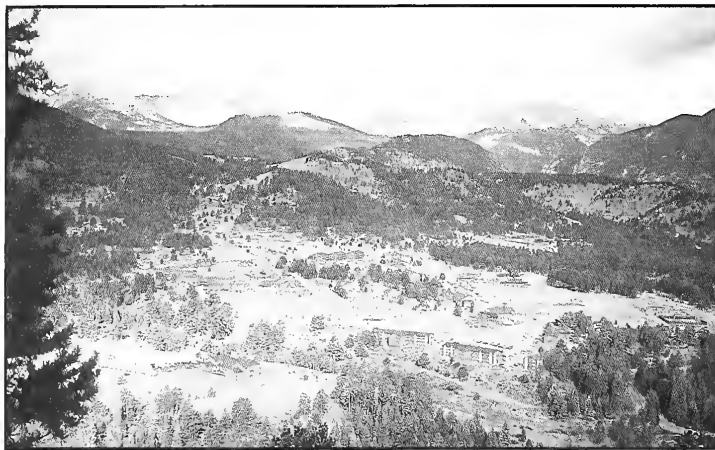
**T**HE shepherds made it to the manger! And so will we, if we persevere. They came, they saw, and they were changed! And so will we, if we persist. Today will be very busy, with meals to prepare, family gatherings to attend, gifts to open. Excitement will abound! By tonight we will be exhausted.

The shepherds had an exhilarating experience as well! For a while they were on a roll, taking in all the excitement and wonder (excitement and wonder that far outstrips anything we are likely ever to know). But then it was over. Then what? "The shepherds returned . . ."

They made the journey, experienced the glory and splendor of the Babe in a manger, and then had to return to work. But everything was different now. They returned, "glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen."

Journeys to the manger are meant to change our lives. And they will if we let them—if we let God work His work in us. Maybe all we can say after our renewed experience of the Savior is "Wow!" But even that will be enough to get other people's attention. Then we too can spread the word concerning what has been told us about this Child. [✠]

*Dr. Moore is pastor of the Saint James, Md., Brethren Church.*



*Nestled among the Rocky Mountains, Estes Park Center will provide a spectacular setting for next year's General Conference.*

## General Conference 2000

**A**LL THE INSPIRATION, challenge, fellowship, and blessings of recent Brethren gatherings—plus the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains and the opportunities of a wonderful vacation spot—that's what General Conference 2000 will offer the Brethren.

Just in case you haven't heard, next year's General Conference will be held at YMCA of the Rockies' **Estes Park Center**, located just five miles from the town of Estes Park, Colorado. Situated on 860 acres, Estes Park Center is bordered on three sides by Rocky Mountain National Park, featuring some of the world's most spectacular scenery.

General Conference sessions will be held in the Center's Walter G. Ruesch Auditorium, a facility that seats 650 people. Meals will be served in the Conference Dining Room, located in the same building.

Lodging for adults will be in Alpen Inn, Mt. Ypsilon Lodge, and Wind River Lodge, all within easy walking distance of the auditorium and dining room. All three lodges have hotel-type rooms with full private bath. Room rates, which include two meals per day, depend on the lodge and the number of persons per room, but all are in the moderate price range. Rate sheets giving the particulars were enclosed in a

recent *Leadership Letter*, so ask your pastor or church moderator for a copy (or request a copy from the National Office by calling 419-289-1708 or by e-mailing [brethren@brethrenchurch.org](mailto:brethren@brethrenchurch.org)). Registration forms will be sent out in January.

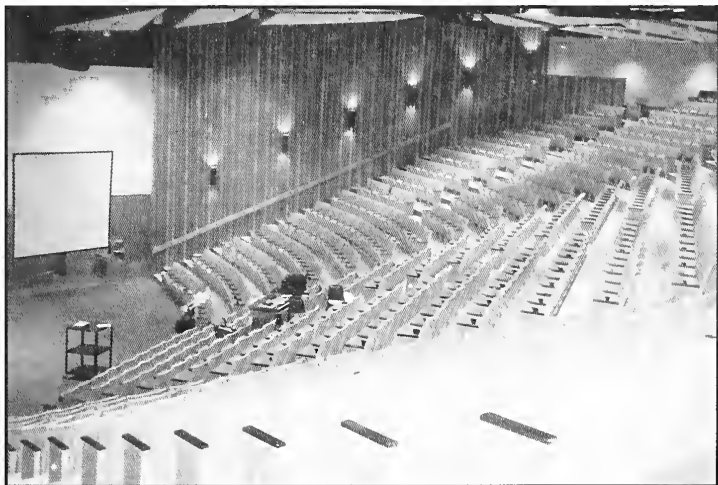
### Getting there

Driving and flying are two obvious ways of getting to Estes Park Center. Taking a train to Denver is

also a possibility. Denver International Airport is the nearest airport, and shuttle service is available from the airport to Estes Park Center (or you can reserve a rental car and pick it up at the airport). The Brethren Church has made arrangements with a travel agency—Premier Meetings and Incentives—to help you plan your air travel. Registration/Air Transportation Forms were sent to pastors and moderators (and are available from the National Office).

In addition to car, plane, or train, at least two people are looking into chartering buses to take people to Colorado. In the Indiana District, Bruce Gorrell of the Roanoke Brethren Church has been exploring this possibility. Interested Brethren in Indiana should contact Roanoke Pastor Ron Burns for more information (phone 219-672-3796; e-mail [rpburns@juno.com](mailto:rpburns@juno.com)).

In Pennsylvania, Bill Stevens of the Vinco Brethren Church is arranging for buses through Lodestar Bus Lines, Inc., of Johnstown. Seats will be available not only to Pennsylvania Brethren, but also to other Brethren in the eastern U.S. (Ohio and east). For more information call Mr. Stevens at 814-322-4594 until the end of the year, and after January 2 until March 31 at 941-474-7678. Or call the Vinco Brethren Church at 814-322-1177.



*The main General Conference sessions will be held in the 650-seat Walter G. Ruesch Auditorium at Estes Park Center.*

Photos on these two pages by Bernice Miller.



Mt. Ypsilon lodge, one of three facilities in which adults will stay during Conference.

## Conference schedule

In general, the Conference schedule will be much the same as in past years, with an opening session on Monday evening, sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and concluding by noon on Friday. But there will be one big difference—nothing will be scheduled Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons. Because Estes Park Center is such a wonderful vacation spot, this will give people free time for sightseeing, tours, various kinds of recreation, or a chance just to relax in a wonderful environment.

## The youth

The National Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) will also have their Convention at Estes Park Center, which, as usual, will run concurrently with the adult Conference. The youth will be staying in the Eastside Lodges (on the opposite side of the campus from the adults), and will have their own separate meeting facilities.

The theme of the Convention will be "Lifted Up," and the focus will be on worship. As in the past, the youth will join the adults for some of their sessions, and adults will have the opportunity to attend some of the youth events if they so choose.

## Things to do

Estes Park Center offers a variety of recreational activities. In addition, it's just a short drive from Estes Park Center to the Visitor's Center of Rocky Mountain National Park or a brief hike from the Estes Park grounds onto park property.

Hiking, climbing, nature walks, and a variety of educational programs are available in the park. Or you might want to drive the park's Trail Ridge Road, which offers nearly twelve miles of driving above timberline.

The town of Estes Park, located five miles from Estes Park Center,

is a tourist's delight. It offers a variety of stores and gift shops, restaurants, two golf courses (an 18-hole and a 9-hole), a marina with boat rental, and other recreational activities. Nearby Boulder also offers a variety of tourist attractions. Denver and Colorado Springs (with the U.S. Air Force Academy nearby) are also great places to visit, but are too far away to drive to in an afternoon. But you might want to spend some time at these places either before or after Conference.

If you have never been to General Conference but have thought you might want to attend some time, 2000 would be an ideal year to do so. And if you are a person who always attends Conference, you certainly won't want to miss next year's gathering. We look forward to seeing all the usual faces and a lot of new ones at General Conference 2000! [✕]

—Richard C. Winfield, editor

## Congregational Ministries Council Update

### Brethren:

The at-large members of the Congregational Ministries Council want to keep you informed of developments on our council. Brian Moore, Cheryl Schmiedt, and I will rotate offering a few words about the council as it works on your behalf.

Let me highlight a few items of interest from our meeting in October.

Do you care for you pastor? Not, "Do you like him?" Rather, are you willing to create an environment in which your pastor is loved, encouraged, and supported. The Leadership Care Study group, a sub-committee of the Congregational Ministries Council, has finalized the Pastoral Care Committee proposal. This proposal recommends that the Pastoral Care Committee replace the Pastoral Relations Committee. The Pastoral Care Committee would exist to promote the care of the pastor and the pastor's family in the following areas:

physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, relational, and financial. This practical proposal provides the opportunity for healthier pastors, which translates into healthier churches.

### Other tasks:

A subcommittee, under the guidance of Rev. Dave Cooksey, is working on an Interim Pastor Ministry, to assist churches in the transition time during pastoral vacancies.

The council reviewed the General Conference schedule for Estes Park 2000. In addition to times for quality worship, training, and fellowship, three afternoons have been reserved for enjoying the area. (See article at left.)

**Plan now.** Premier Meetings and Incentives will help you handle your travel arrangements. May 30, 2000, is the deadline for working with this travel agency.

In future months council members Brian Moore and Cheryl Schmiedt will write about other exciting Congregational Ministries Council developments.

—Rev. Tim Garner,  
Member at Large



## World Relief offers gifts that make a difference

**D**OES YOUR holiday shopping list include life-changing gifts like five piglets, a fishing net, pumpkin seeds, and a fully-equipped doctor's bag?

If not, and you're tired of a shopping list filled with items people really don't need, you might want to check out World Relief's *Catalog of Hope*. Using this catalog, you can provide life-changing gifts to poor families in places like Cambodia, Burkina Faso, India, and Peru.

### For example:

- For \$1.50 you can buy five baby chicks for a hungry family in Vietnam to raise and sell for a profit.
- For \$10 you can purchase sewing lessons for a poor woman in India so that she can support her children with a new skill.
- For \$60 you can supply a mother in Mozambique with the flour, yeast, salt, and firewood she needs to make 450 loaves of bread for her home bakery. The income means this mom can better feed and clothe her children and buy supplies to continue her business.

With your purchase, you receive a gift card suitable for sending to a loved one that says the particular gift has been purchased in his or her honor. Some families have opted to forego needless presents to each other entirely and instead to give presents to the poor in each person's honor.

Make your holiday giving more meaningful by using World Relief's *Catalog of Hope*. To receive a copy, call World Relief at 1-800-535-LIFE (5433) and request one. [✕]



Photo by Janice Rowsey

Rev. Jim Rowsey (top right), pastor of the Garber Brethren Church, and others look on as members of the congregation burn pieces of the church's notes and mortgages.

## Friendly fire at Garber Brethren Church

**Ashland, Ohio** — There was a fire in the sanctuary of the Garber Brethren Church in Ashland on Sunday morning, October 17, but it was the kind of fire churches like to have. During the worship service church members burned not one, not two, but *five* mortgages and notes totaling \$168,500—money the congregation had borrowed to build a new sanctuary, make other improvements, and purchase additional properties.

The paid-off documents were cut into strips and placed in the day's bulletins. At the designated time in the service, members of the congre-

gation came forward and put their piece of the mortgage or note on the fire. As the fire burned down, they sang "To God be the Glory" followed by a responsive reading of the litany that was used when the new sanctuary was dedicated in 1992.

Pastor Jim Rowsey gave recognition to those who had served on the building committee and those who had helped in the construction, including laymen from across the denomination who came to lend a hand. After the service, the congregation continued its celebration of being debt-free with a baked-potato bar and a time of fellowship. [✕]

### In Memory

**Edna Lavaughn Kindley**, 93, a long-time member of and active worker in the North Manchester First Brethren Church and a former pastor's wife, died October 27. She was born March 29, 1906, to Rev. George E. and Rosa B. Swihart in Miami County, Ind. On April 28, 1934, she married Clarence R. Kindley, who survives her.

For a number of years the Kindleys operated a grocery store. Then in mid-life, Clarence accepted a call to the pastoral ministry. Together they served the Flora, Ind., Corinth

(Twelve Mile, Ind.), and Johnstown, Pa., Third Brethren churches.

In addition to her husband, she is also survived by three daughters—Lavaughn Wells of Boise, Idaho, Margaret Dean of Rockford, Ill., and Alice Ault of St. Louis, Mo.—five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Her funeral service was held October 30 at the North Manchester Church with pastors Kurt Stout and Marlin McCann and her nephew, Rev. John Mishler, officiating. Memorial gifts may be made to the North Manchester First Brethren Church Memorial Fund. [✕]



## Oak Hill Brethren demonstrate outpouring of appreciation for Pastor Bill and Gene Skeldon

**Oak Hill, W. VA.** — Members of the Oak Hill First Brethren Church went all out in showing appreciation to Pastor Bill Skeldon and his wife Gene during Pastor Appreciation Month (October). But perhaps that's how it should be for a pastor who currently has one of the longest tenures of service at one church (26 years) of any pastor in the denomination.

On Sunday, October 17, the congregation honored the Skeldons during the morning worship service. In addition, during October three members of the congregation—Kenneth Nuckels and Burl and Jean Burton—redecorated Pastor Skeldon's study, painting the walls and putting in new carpet.

When the redecorating was done, the old desk in the study looked so



*Rev. Bill and Gene Skeldon*

out of place that the church decided to purchase a new one. The desk was presented to Pastor Skeldon to be-

come his personal possession. As it turns out, purchase of a new desk was authorized way back in 1973, about the time Pastor Skeldon arrived at the church. Mr. Nuckels gave two reasons for the delay in purchasing the desk, one being that the congregation wanted to make sure that Pastor Skeldon was going to stay before it did so!

Rev. Skeldon was given the day off on Pastor Appreciation Sunday, which is to say that Rev. Milton Robinson, a member of the congregation, preached the sermon that morning. But being the hard-working pastor he is, Rev. Skeldon still led the choir and made the announcements.

During the service, Mr. Nuckels, who is Sunday school superintendent for the church, spoke of the Skeldons' early years at Oak Hill and recounted various world events that have transpired since that time. He also spoke about children of the church who have grown to adulthood during the pastorate of Rev. Skeldon. He especially stressed how very much the congregation appreciated the Skeldons' faithful and devoted service.

As a tangible expression of its appreciation, the congregation presented the Skeldons with corsages, a pen and pencil set for each, a ten-foot banner relevant to the occasion with members' names and affectionate comments written on it, and a basket of cards of appreciation. For his part, Pastor Skeldon expressed how blessed he feels to have the privilege of serving this congregation. [✝]

— reported by R. Rogusky

It was said that the Wise Men after visiting the Babe in the manger "went back another way." No one can really see Christ and go back the same way. Life becomes different from that hour.

— E. Stanley Jones

### Brethren Impact Through Prayer Update

Four *Lighthouses of Prayer* were established in Ashland, Ohio, this month! Participants have reported with awe that God has already displayed His faithfulness to their prayers. Neighbors who never spoke or acknowledged each other before have begun saying hello and waving to one another from their cars and their porches. A feeling of friendliness has begun to spread over the community like a warm blanket.

Another individual who began her *Lighthouse* in September shared that God's faithfulness is being realized within her heart. God is changing how she feels toward her neighbors and therefore changing how she is relating to those neighbors. God is removing her bitterness and replacing it with His love!

*Do you have a Lighthouse story to share?* We would love to hear how God is blessing you. You can send your story to Karen Frado in care of the National Office.

With the October issue of *Leadership Letter*, information was sent to pastors and church moderators about **Forty Days of Prayer and Fasting**. Fasting is a spiritual dis-

cipline that calls for a commitment to self-denial. While we usually think of fasting as not eating, it can also include a fast from television, from an hour of sleep, from one meal per day, and so on. What is important is that you are giving up something in order to spend more time with God; that you are strengthening your capacity for obedience; that you are seeking to increase your sensitivity to the Holy Spirit; and that you are heightening your desire for God's presence.

But is fasting biblical? Moses, David, Elijah, Daniel, Jesus, and Paul all provide us examples of fasting. Fasting is not seeking to gain God's favor by "good works," but rather a means by which we can refocus our attention on our spiritual growth and on our relationship with Christ.

Some Christians are planning to begin fasting at midnight December 31, 1999, and to continue until February 9, 2000. Thus they will be fasting and praying during the first 40 days of the new year, the new decade, the new century, and the new millennium. For more information call 1-800-493-7539 or see [www.fastingprayer.com](http://www.fastingprayer.com). [✝]

— Karen Frado

**Rev. Hays K. Logan**, 93, retired Brethren pastor living in New Windsor, Md., died October 28 of injuries from an automobile accident.

He was born March 2, 1906, in Jones Mills, Pa., the son of John and Rebecca Logan. He was married to Garnet M. Arison Logan, who died in 1990.



He entered pastoral ministry in mid-life, studying with Moody Bible Institute and becoming pastor of the Gatewood, W. Va., Brethren Church in 1956. He served churches in Indiana and Maryland. In 1964 he became pastor of the Linwood, Md., Brethren Church, which he served until he retired in 1973. After retiring he filled pulpits in 20 local churches through 1991.

Surviving are daughter Bette Gover of New Cumberland, Pa.; 10 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. A son, Robert, died in 1980.

His funeral service was held November 1 at Hartzler Funeral Home in New Windsor with Rev. John Mills officiating. Memorial gifts may be made to the Linwood Church. [†]

Occasionally one finds a book that makes an impact on one's life. For me, *Praying for the World's 365 Most Influential People* (Harvest House; David Kopp, Heather Harpham Kopp, and Larry Wilson, editors) was just such a book. Subtitled *5 Minutes a Day to Change Your World*, the book offers Christians a way to join other Christians worldwide in prayer for some of the world's most important people.

Set in a daily devotional format, the book calls us to pray for both Christians and non-Christians, for influential people in various areas of life, including politics, entertainment, sports, business, medicine, news media, and world leadership.

The book presents a different person each day. It gives a short biography of that person, presents a quotation from the person, suggests prayer starters, gives a Scrip-

**Port Republic, Va.** — Brethren who attend the Cross Keys Worship Center believe that “Church should be fun!” (to quote member Johnny Roach). So the congregation had some fun on Sunday, October 10, with a “Crazy Hat Day.”

The theme for the day was "Hats, Hearts, & Hugs." Everyone was encouraged to wear a hat with personality. Spare hats were available for those who came without one.

If that wasn't "nutty" enough, the Cross Keys congregation was reminded that the following Sunday (Oct. 17) would be "Nutty Sunday." Everyone was encouraged to pick up invitations—bags of peanuts with information about the service—to pass out to friends and neighbors during the week.

Nutty Sunday featured a sermon by Pastor Pat Velanzon from 1 John 3:1 and John 3:16 that proclaimed the message, "God is nuts about you!" A lunch of peanut butter and



Tracey Wade (l.), Kitty Davis (c.), and Kris Estep model the hats they wore on Crazy Hat Day.

jelly sandwiches and other nutty dishes followed the service.

“God is continuing to send us both seekers and believers—all with wonderful gifts and talents,” reports Kathy Velanzon, wife of the pastor. “We praise Him for building *His* Body, and [we] recognize we are *His* workmanship. And it’s fun too!” [3]

—reported by Kathy Velanzon

ture verse, and includes a mail or e-mail address through which the person can be contacted. Most of the people named in the book gave their permission to be included.

While most of us would gladly pray for Billy Graham or Tim LaHaye, how do we feel about praying for Saddam Hussein or Marilyn Manson? Nevertheless, Paul admonished Timothy: "I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. As you make your requests, plead for God's mercy upon them, and give thanks. Pray this way for kings and all others who are in authority, so that we can live in peace and quietness, in godliness and dignity" (1 Timothy 2:1-2. *NLT*).

This book makes it easier for us to do what Scripture commands us to do. It can add an exciting new facet to our daily prayer life.

Ms. Fisher is an employee of The Carpenter's Shop, the Brethren bookstore in Ashland, Ohio.

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